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THEY DO NOT
DIE

CHARLES A. HALL





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542 Windsor Ave.

WINNIPEG - MAN.

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I · KNOW · TRANSPLANTED ·
HUMAN · WORTH
WILL · GROW · TO · PROFIT,
OTHERWHERE.

—TENNYSON.



H. U. HALL



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THEY DO NOT DIE

BY

CHARLES A. HALL

AUTHOR OF "THE DIVINITY THAT SHAPES OUR ENDS"
"THE ART OF BEING HAPPY," "PLANT-LIFE," ETC.



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PROEM

*"I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere."*

—TENNYSON.

BE glad and rejoice, O Sorrowing Hearts;
They do not die! Comfort ye, Comfort
ye, O ye Lonely and Despairing; They
are not dead! For you there is "Beauty for
ashes" if you no longer blind your eyes with
dust: beauty at the heart of things: life and
light in the spirit. Lift up your hearts and
your eyes and behold the wondrous vision! Be
not beguiled by the illusions of sense, beware of
the glamour of that which seems so real and
is not real; betwixt the appearances of sense
and the realities of spirit there is a difference
most vast. Death is the great illusion; Life,
full, rich, abounding Life, is the reality:

*"Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."*

*With passionate conviction I proclaim Life:
Life and the human spirit triumphant over the*

grave, unshattered by shot or shell, impervious to thrust of bayonet, untouched by disease or blight, superior to water and to fire, invincible to death.

For you, O Anguished Ones, there is the "Oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness"; the joy realised through sorrow and sacrifice and the vision splendid; the praise that flows from joyous heart and heightened pulse beating in tune with music most divine. Put on thy strength, O son of man; assume thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion: break forth into joy and sing together, for the Lord doth comfort His people.

"In the night-time of distress Hope sees a star, and listening Love can hear the rustling of a wing." But the star rising above the horizon of your distress, O Troubled Ones, is not the lesser, flickering light of Hope, but, rather, the radiant orb of Certitude: 'tis an orb fixed and permanent, altogether dependable; not a meteor with but momentary glow leaving our mental firmament darker for its short-lived light. I testify of things seen and heard; things reasonable and true.

The faithful and far-seeing poet, living in dark days, caught one grand glimpse of immortality :

*“ This wretched inn, where we scarce stay to bait,
We call our dwelling-place ;
We call one step a race :
But angels, in their full enlightened state,
Angels, who Live, and know what 'tis to Be ;
Who all the nonsense of our language see ;
Who speak Things, and our words, their ill-drawn pictures, scorn ;
When we, by a foolish figure, say,
Behold an old man dead ! then they
Speak properly, and cry, ‘ Behold a man-child born.’ ”*

*Be comforted, O Aching Hearts ; THEY DO
NOT DIE : THEY ARE NOT DEAD.*

THE ARGUMENT



THE conclusions reached in this book are based on rational grounds: the appeal is to Reason, not to Authority.

Man, in this world, is a spirit clad in clay. As to his spirit he is immortal.

Death is not the end, but constitutes a new birth and beginning. It is a process of Life, a means of transition from one world to another.

The spiritual world, into which man enters consciously through the gate of death, is as substantial to the conscious spiritual being as the material world is real to the spirit clad in flesh.

A spirit is a *man*, death having deprived him of nothing that is essential to his manhood: the associations of the spiritual world are *human* in every respect. In spirit-life we are human beings in a human world.

Personality survives death: the identity of ourselves and our friends, under spirit-world conditions, is assured.

While in the flesh we are subject to spiritual laws and forces, and death makes no break in the continuity of their operation.

There is order, beauty, and variety in the spiritual world; the life there is progressive, and there is scope for every imaginable human activity. Our ultimate destiny and circumstance are determined by the inward quality of our life and character.

Even now, sympathy brings us into the closest inward association with the dear departed, although, normally, we are unaware of the fact. There may be occasional, but fleeting, conscious contact with them, but this ought not to be sought by disorderly means.

THEY DO NOT DIE

DEATHLESS MAN

I



WHAT men call death is inevitable; it is part of the scheme of things and is accepted by the average person with equanimity. A dread of death is far less common than some would have us to suppose. We may fear lest we be buried alive, or anticipate with concern the illness and pain, and other concomitants of death, but, for the most of us, death itself has no terrors. Death-bed agonies, for the most part, exist only in the imagination of neurotic and prejudiced religionists, who, by lurid descriptions of the alleged dying anguish of the impenitent, attempt to frighten simple-minded folk into acceptance of their shibboleths. Perhaps Tennyson articulated the unexpressed

feeling of common and not profoundly thoughtful humanity, in respect to life and death, in his *In Memoriam* :—

Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

This sense that He who made death is the conqueror of death is something to be thankful for, and the feeling that justice is at the heart of creation is all to the good; but the enquiring mind wants more than a vague sense of things; it demands rational conviction.

In normal times, and while we are busy with the active engagements of everyday life, we are not greatly troubled about the deeper problems of life and death and the hereafter. Occasional bereavement may stir a temporary curiosity, or arouse a spirit of earnest enquiry, but it is usual for us to revert, with the lapse of time, to the common mental and practical activities of the work-a-day world. One does not venture to deplore this reversion, for while we are in this world we have worldly duties to perform in

respect of which we should certainly fail were our whole energies to be absorbed by contemplation of the hereafter. Amid the distractions of earth-life opportunities can be found for quiet meditation on things unseen, and if we take full advantage of them we shall certainly gain strength and conviction sufficient to save us from descent into the utter inferno of materialism. The men who, in an hour of spiritual elevation and splendid vision, beheld the glory of the Transfigured One, did not long remain on the mount; they speedily descended to daily duty in the common haunts of men, and, doubtless, were sustained and cheered in their wayfaring by the ineffaceable memory of what they had seen and heard. Far be it from me to countenance or encourage a morbid interest in spiritual things; that way madness lies. Nor would I attempt to so paint the spiritual world as to enhance its value at the expense of this, and thus justify the desire for an early quittance. Our life here has great value and profound spiritual meaning, and it is not only cowardly, but vain, to shirk its issues and responsibilities in an untimely demise.

But, in the way in which men usually understand things, the times in which we are at

present living are far from being normal. For more than three years the world has been in the awful throes of a war whose magnitude and frightfulness exceed anything of the kind that has occurred in the history of man. Millions of young heroic men of many tongues have faced and passed through death; bereavement is added to bereavement, and still the postman's knock and telegraph boy's ring are heard with dreadful apprehension. Is death the end? cries the heart-broken widow. Mother-love and father-love yearn for "the touch of a vanished hand, the sound of a voice that is still." The betrothed languish for the love of their dreams, the love that, here on earth, cannot now reach its final, rich fruition. A score of questions agitate an incalculable company of distressed ones. Is life all barren gain and bitter loss? What else is it but a struggling, and struggling, and an ending in nothing? If the dear lads survive death, are they happy and cared for? Are they with friends, and shall we see them when we, too, have died? Can they see us, even if we cannot see them? Cannot we secure some sign from them, some little evidence that they live and still love us? Can you prove, beyond all doubt and question, that they are

not dead? It is to such questioners that I address myself, and the burden of my message is, They do not die; they are not dead.

II



ALM reason need not necessarily be cold comfort. Let us face the issues before us in philosophic mien. I am no soothsayer attempting to quieten the simple with smooth, but unjustifiable statements. I administer no mental opiates. In whatever guise it presents itself, wrong is wrong, and no condemnation of the cruel ambitions and calculating wickedness, that have plunged the world into an orgy of blood-spilling, can be too strong. Men, and men alone, are responsible for the recorded and unrecorded evils of the times; 'tis


Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn,

and any attempt to shift the responsibility to the Divine Being is futile, if not mean and cowardly. Whatever may be the delight that awaits the ardent patriot in the spiritual realms, the happy eternal issue does not justify the

means of death; they may be justified by patriotism, but that is another matter. Nor can I paint glory with a big brush on a huge canvas, even for the mitigation of the anguish of a torn heart. I make no large promises that have not the slightest chance of being fulfilled; I simply draw attention to facts of daily occurrence, to laws which are commonly recognised, and to deductions that seem to me to be supported by sound evidence. Much as I might be disposed to accept Authority and to indulge in dogmatic assertion, I feel that the usefulness of this volume would be jeopardised were I not to resist any such inclination. They who can repose confidence in authority or dogma, and draw comfort from such wells, may joyfully welcome confirmation of their trust in a rational form: but one cannot help but observe that their company is rapidly diminishing in number; hence, if one is to help the immeasurably larger company of those who distrust authority and ignore dogma, the presentation of our argument must be only in the form of a statement of facts, and an appeal to reason. If the reader does not agree that the reasoning leads to certitude, he may, at least, admit that it points to high probability and, so, be consoled

to some extent. Yet I insist, call it dogmatism an you like, I claim it to be reasoned conviction, They do not die; They are not dead!

III

 HERE seem to be four distinct mental attitudes to the matter of human immortality. First, there is a not too numerous coterie of earnest thinkers who are rationally convinced that man continues to live under spirit conditions after the transition called death. Second, a very large company of men accept the conception of immortality, not so much on intellectual conviction as from the fact that they have been schooled in the idea from infancy: they are merely conventional believers. Third, there is the purely agnostic position with regard to the possibility of a life after death: this encourages a *laissez-faire* spirit and discounts enquiry. And, fourth, there is a small and possibly negligible minority who boldly and dogmatically assert that death spells annihilation: their temerity is great, and commands little respect.

IV



WHATEVER the mental attitudes of different men may be towards immortality, I have yet to meet the individual who does not cling tenaciously and instinctively to life; who does not live as if life were to be continued indefinitely. We do not live as men who are to be annihilated, and it seems to me that the impulsion of life in us towards life in constant continuation, is more to be trusted than an intellectual denial of immortality founded on insufficient grounds: the one is a trustworthy instinct, wondrously prophetic: the other is a futile ignoring of an instinct which, in practice, brooks no denial. There is a universal hope for immortality, a general intuition that we survive death. The fact that we can formulate ideas of immortality and hope for it, is a strong argument in its favour. I am aware of the various attempts that have been made to prove that the intuition of personal survival of death is not universal: it is alleged that it does not exist among certain obscure tribes, who, it is declared, have neither hope of immortality nor

conception of God. This allegation betrays an anxious haste to secure negative evidence, and it is extremely doubtful if it be founded on fact: closer acquaintance with the tribes in question, and a more sympathetic enquiry into their instincts and beliefs, will probably yield evidence of a quite different nature. Perhaps the fantastic notions of other-world life which hold favour among certain religionists, regardless of the decrees of probability and in spite of all reason, account for the anxiety of the iconoclasts to sweep away all belief in an after-life. And, mayhap, more reasonable ideas may be treated by them in a less cavalier manner.

I am sorry to be compelled to deal with objections to immortality, but as they exist I can hardly ignore them. The unprejudiced reader will observe that they carry little weight, and they who yearn for spiritual satisfaction will not be overwhelmed by them.

It is sometimes seriously argued that the idea of spirit-life and immortality has its historic foundation in dream experiences of our primitive, untutored ancestors; that from such obscure and none too trustworthy beginnings all doctrines of immortality have evolved. Supposing this to be true, one might contend that

a general conception that has survived through innumerable centuries of intellectual development is worthy to survive, and has in itself an intrinsic sanction and merit. But the alleged dream-experience origin of the idea is fraught with disaster to the attitude of the opponents of the doctrine of survival of bodily death. One does not venture to assert with Shakespeare, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on," but dream activity, occurring as it does during the abeyance of our objective faculties, points to the actuality of a plane of existence of which we are unaware during our wakeful hours, and into which we may be openly introduced when "Our little life is rounded with a sleep." Dream experience is admittedly no final argument for immortality, but it suggests a region of consciousness which might become permanent to our experience after death: in any case, were I to hold a brief for total annihilation I should carefully ignore the evidence of dreams.

Quite possibly visions of the night have played a part in the formulation of notions of immortality, but I am convinced that as a thing in itself, and apart from all ideas about it, the sense of immortality originated in, and will always be supported by, instinct or intuition.

And intuition has again and again proved itself to be more reliable than intellectualism. Intuition is deep-rooted in the heart of things; whereas ordinary thought processes are limited by sense impressions of an external character. And we must have a care when we talk about primitive ideas and superstitions. All that we know about them has come to us in the form of myth and legend, and these are not always to be accepted at their face value. Childish in form, they frequently embody profound wisdom, and prove to be graphic presentations of intense spiritual conceptions.

V



EVOLUTION is a fact, not necessarily in the Darwinian sense, but as a principle of life and development. Evolutionary processes have culminated in the making of man, and in the specialisation of his personality. Myriads of years must have passed before it was possible for man to exist upon this earth, and it does seem a strange, if not sad, commentary upon the scheme of things, if that personality which

it has taken myriads of years to evolve is only to survive for the brief span of sixty, seventy, or at best a hundred years. Surely, evolution is not to be arrested in the making of man as a physical being: nay, we know that intellectual, moral and spiritual developments proceed side-by-side with physical growth and tend to transcend it; and we may be justified in thinking that the physical is but the basis upon which the superstructure of mind and spirit rests. The whole trend of evolution is towards the making of man as a moral, intellectual and spiritual being, possessed of conscience and religious instinct. The physical part of our nature is as a womb in which the higher spiritual man is conceived, and it is fair to assume that the true and abiding manhood of man is eventually delivered from the womb of mortality, laying aside its material body and appearing, in a body of psychic substance, upon a higher plane of being, where it has fuller and freer scope for progress. With the materialistic contention that life and mind are the attributes and products of atomic matter, and that their wonderful and intricate phenomena are due to so much chemistry, I have no sympathy. It is more reasonable to conclude that instead of

life and mind being resultant upon material organisation, they are the prime causes of organisation, and have potencies towards issues transcending atomic matter. Besides, the most recent physical research leads us to the conclusion that the material atom is not so simple a thing as was once supposed: it is a colony of intensely active and restless electrons; a tiny sphere of positive electricity within which minute units of negative electricity regularly revolve in definite orbits. Atomic matter seems to have evolved from the non-atomic ether, and atoms tend to dematerialize and return to the etheric womb from which they originally issued. It is the imponderable ether, from which the atom emerges, and in which it lives, moves, and has its being, that appears to be fundamental to all physical phenomena, and, in the light of present-day knowledge, it is becoming more and more futile to refer the deep things of our lives to the grosser activities of atomic matter. That which we can weigh and handle is demonstrably less substantial than the imponderable substance which holds it in being. Scientific enquiry is becoming distinctly *interior*, and its findings grow in favour of a non-atomic soul of things. I say that a realm

of substantial, if imponderable, spirit pervades the realm of matter and transcends it: that from this substance the spirit and mind of man is organised, and that this spirit survives bodily death.

The notion of thought being due to cerebration, and passion to chemistry, indicates a strangely topsy-turvy way of thinking. Is mind a product of the brain, or is the brain a mechanism of mind? I take it that thought is a cause of brain activity, and that any chemistry that is associated with passion is produced by the said passion. I have yet to hear of a chemical formula that will yield spiritual love, or of the physical brain activity that is sufficient to account for religion.

VI



SOME materialists, without relaxing their grip of the annihilation doctrine, graciously throw us a sop to feed our yearnings on. They declare that we are immortal *in the race* by transmitted influence, our contributions to progress, our thought and influence by which

the race benefits, being all that can be considered deathless. This juggling with the word immortality does not satisfy our hopes and spiritual instincts, nor does the declaration lull them to sleep. No matter how strongly the argument for transmitted influence is urged, it will never be generally accepted, because it does not satisfy the heart of man. Of course, one admits that influence is transmitted, and that posterity will be the richer for our attainments; but the only immortality that can give us personal satisfaction and compensation is our personal survival of bodily death.

VII



WE are impatient of the limitations of matter, and the human spirit chafes at the disabilities of the body in which it temporarily resides. Many a time do we feel, so to speak, bigger than our bodies, and that they are, in spite of their wonderful design, awkwardly inert and clumsy.

“We begin to feel the body’s restraints in infancy, and we maintain a life-long struggle against it. The infant feels it in its first

efforts in learning to walk. Indeed, it is this very desire to escape from its restraints that impels it to the difficult and perilous task. The foot will not convey it to the desired spot; the hand will not grasp the glittering bauble. The youth, with all his exuberant life and strength, chafes under it. He would mount with the eagle; he would fly with the wind; he would be here, there, everywhere to gratify his insatiable curiosity. But the body lags behind and anchors him to the earth, and fetters him. When he would learn to wield the instruments of labour or art, his industry and patience are tested to the utmost. Even in the prime of life, the body is never perfectly obedient to the soul. And then how soon the eye fails the scholar; the hand will not obey the musician; the nerves grow tremulous, and the muscles tire. A great part of the invention, skill, and the effort of humanity is employed to overcome the weight and drag of the body. The steamship, the railway, the aeroplane, and the telegraph have all been called to assist man in keeping pace with his desires; and though they have nearly annihilated space and time, he is as impatient of delay as ever, and grieves and despairs at the immeasurable distance between his attainments and his wants.

“It is true man gains in his control over the body for a time, but he soon reaches the limit of its capacities; and then its abilities to express the thoughts and affections, and do the will of the spirit, continually diminishes. The strength fails; the senses grow obtuse and dim; and the body becomes the soul’s prison; shuts it out from the material world and all its delights; fetters its limbs with feebleness, and immures it in a dungeon, devoid of light and joy. How terrible would be its fate if there was no release from it. But death comes as a blessed deliverer from this bondage to the flesh; breaks off our chains, clears the mist from the eye, and sets every faculty free.”

The fact that we feel “cabined, cribbed, confined” by our material bodies, that we are conscious of their limitations, that we are moved by eagerness for attainments to which the material body is an obstacle, is in itself a powerful argument in favour of continued existence in a region of less restricted scope. “’Tis the divinity that stirs within us,” and if there are law, justice, and a soul of progress in the scheme of things, we may rightly expect to come finally into such state and circumstance as will admit of fuller and freer self-expression.

And, in that state, there will surely be a more perfect adjustment of body and soul than we experience at the present time. As Browning puts it:

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives the melodist,
When eternity confirms the conception of an hour.

The life that proved too high, the heroic for life too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once; we shall hear it by and by.

VIII



DO not say that man *has* a spirit, but that he *is* a spirit even here and now: this is a distinction of vast import. When folk talk of a being having a soul or spirit, or of his "giving up the ghost," they have in mind some sort of unsubstantial vapour, or invisible, formless essence that drifts into some indefinable limbo after death. They appear to conceive of a man having a soul just as a body has breath. No wonder that such await, expectantly, the great day when the shapeless essence shall return to

earth to secure the body and faculties denied to it in its alleged nebulous condition in the dim twilight of its limbo! But when I assert that man *is* a spirit, in this world operating in a material body suited to the uses of the material realm, I imply that the spirit is the real man, that it is the spirit which loves, thinks, imagines, reasons, feels, and acts; that it is the spirit which consciously or subconsciously controls the movements of the body. As Swedenborg says:

“That which is material does not live of itself, but only that which is spiritual: therefore whatever lives in man is his spirit, and the body only serves this, as an instrument is subservient to a living, moving force. Since then everything that lives in the body, and, from life, acts and feels, belongs exclusively to the spirit, and nothing of it to the body, it follows that the spirit is the real man: or, what is the same thing, the man considered in himself is a spirit, and that the spirit is also in a form similar to that of the body; for whatever lives and feels in man belongs to his spirit—and everything in him, from head to foot, lives and feels. Hence it is, that when the body is separated from its spirit, which is called dying, the man continues to be a man, and to live.”

Edmund Spenser, the sixteenth century poet, gave to posterity the gist of the whole matter in his memorable lines:

For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form, and doth the body make.

It is important for us to observe that the man, that is, the spirit, while in the physical body, survives the exigencies of hourly decay and repair to which it is subject. It used to be stated that the whole substance of the body is thrown off and renewed in the course of every seven years. On the basis of this consideration, a man of seventy will have had his body renewed ten times; yet the personality with its faculties, and with the memories of very early associations, survives all the business of change. More recent calculations indicate that the substance of the body is changed much more frequently; in that event our argument is strengthened. If human personality persists through such constant bodily decay and repair without detriment to itself, we may, surely, reasonably anticipate that it will survive the last great and liberating change, which we call death.

The spirit is greater than the body. The spirit is the architect of the body. The spirit

is the builder of the body. It is the spirit which regulates the constant business of decay and repair by repelling effete material and attracting, and ordering, particles that it can use in repair. Man is substantial; his material body is ephemeral. The distinction between a man and his body is, that the former is the organiser, and the latter the organised; the one is a form of living, non-atomic spiritual substance; the other is composed of gross, atomic matter and subject to disintegration. "That which has lived shall surely live for ever; only that dies which was for ever dead."


But what of senile decay? We know that in normal circumstances the physical body increases up to a certain point; that is, the business of growth outsteps decay, construction exceeds destruction. The time arrives when waste and renewal are fairly evenly balanced; this we call maturity. But the balance is soon disturbed, and waste begins to outrun repair. Ultimately decay becomes so pronounced that death is inevitable. Perhaps you will say that the mind of man grows with bodily increase, and wanes co-incidentally with its decay; and you may aver that this points to mental failure in old age and oblivion with death. As so often

happens, the simple explanation, based on misleading appearances, is wrong. The genuine truth is that the mind and spirit outgrow the body; that there comes a time when it can no longer completely respond to the spirit. The spirit draws towards its own peculiar sphere, and aspires to conditions in which it will have freer play. The fact is, we are not intended to remain permanently in this world, and the gradual decay of the earthly body is a beautifully gentle liberation of the spirit, enabling us to get used to the idea of leaving a sphere which serves a temporary use, and preparing us to peacefully relinquish lower concerns in favour of "a destiny of more rewarded toil." Were the physical body really an intelligent being, it might declare of the spirit, in the words of one of old, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

"Soul is form, and doth the body make." The farther we enquire into the origin and behaviour of matter, and the deeper we probe into the phenomena of life, the more confirmed do we become in this grand conclusion. And it is very far-reaching in its implications. Seeing that the material body is formed by the living spirit, it must be its analogue, the effigy and

earthly garb of the deathless soul. The human form of the body represents to the eye of sense the appearance of our immortal form as appreciated by the eye of the spirit. The body corresponds to the soul. This being so, it follows that as we have material hands, feet, eyes, and ears, the spirit must be furnished with similar organs; the distinction between a material limb and a limb of the spirit being that the former is composed of atomic matter, and the latter of non-atomic spiritual substance. The spirit is *human* in every essential, in all respects fully equipped with limbs, organs and faculties requisite for human activity. Such an equipment of the spirit is necessary for the maintenance of personal identity, and, the reflecting reader will observe, unless identity is preserved, there can be no immortality that will be satisfactory to anybody.

IX

 HERE is a further argument for immortality that weighs very strongly with a number of earnest thinkers and investigators. Throughout human history men and women, here and there, claim to have seen and heard other-world visitants, and to have beheld visions of a purely spiritual origin. The various available accounts of remarkable psychic phenomena would occupy many large volumes. However they may be explained, these experiences are repeated with such constant insistence that to utterly ignore them would be a piece of folly. The investigations of the Psychic Research Society, scoffed at as they are by the prejudiced world, have not been without their fruitage, and several eminent members of the Society, after submitting evidence to the most crucial tests, have been convinced in favour of immortality. The late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, president of the Society, produced an extensive volume, entitled *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, in which he set forth evidence which satisfied him, and many others, that there

is a life supplementary to that we now live. Several eminent scientific investigators have openly avowed their sincere convictions as to man's continued existence after death, among them Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, Sir William Crooks and Sir Oliver Lodge. Men ought not to lightly set aside the carefully considered conclusions of such men. The psychic phenomena of to-day, which are of a remarkably extensive character, and in many instances well attested, enable us to yield more respect to the claims of the older seers, in which, after allowing for the products of lively imagination, there is a residuum of genuine psychic experience. In the matter of seership, a man of the eighteenth century stands out distinctly and unique. This man, whose good faith is without question, and whose prolonged scientific and philosophic training enabled him to scrutinise phenomena with acumen and judgment, is Emanuel Swedenborg. That which men have longed for, prayed for, and for which they have sought some special elixir or specific; that which metaphysicians, theologians, philosophers and scientists have wrangled about in terms according with their several prejudices, Swedenborg asserts as a fact as certain as the air we breathe

or the food we eat. He claims in the coldest of terms, without passion or excitement, and as one who regards seership as a common-place of life, to have had open commerce with the spiritual world, and spiritual beings, during a protracted period of many years. The following passage is typical of many that occur in his voluminous works:

“I can assert that man, as soon as he dies, is in the other life, and lives a spirit among spirits; and that he then appears to himself and all others precisely as a man in the world, endowed with every sense, both internal and external: thus that the death of the body is only the casting away of such things as had served for use and function in the world: and, moreover, that death itself is a continuation of life, but in another world, which is unseen to the eyes of the earthly body, but seen there in a light which a thousand-fold exceeds the mid-day light of the world. As I know this from many years’ living experience—still continued—therefore I assert it; I still converse, and have often conversed, with almost all I had known in the world, and who are dead; with some, two or three days after their decease; most of them were very indignant that they had not believed anything of a life

which was to continue after death ; with some of them I have conversed not for a day merely, but for months and years ; and I have been permitted to see their successive or progressive states of life."

If the world at large is not prepared to give credence to so explicit an assertion, it ought, at least, to render respect to the simple, unvarnished statement on a subject of perennial human interest, made by a man of such excellent convictions and credentials. But one is not unmindful of the age-old words, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead."

A great body of evidence turns the balance of reason in favour of human immortality, and demonstrates the trustworthiness of the soul's deep feeling in its direction. We may conclude, with Cato:—

It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well!—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.

X



NATURE demands that man should first be a good animal, but supernatural quickly intervenes and, using the physical as a medium of operation, speedily shows its hand. It presses upon us with urgent insistence in its determination that from the animal a man shall evolve. The story of the adventure of life rapidly develops into one in which the physical falls into the background, and the moral and spiritual emerge in striking contrast. We soon learn to estimate our being in terms of the imponderable: honour is valued above height of body, integrity is esteemed more than thew and sinew, beauty of manly character is accepted as of incalculably greater worth than beauty of form and face. Our real life is soon found to be centred in love or hate, generosity or greed, good or evil, false craft or frank probity. These intangible, but real things characterise us far more than our animal bodies, for the simple reason that they constitute our lives. To think and speak of a man as having his life utterly in the physical is gross foolishness: his affections

and thoughts, his delights and sympathies, his loves, his virtues, declare him to be what he really is—a spiritual being with a far-reaching and comprehensive destiny.

Man is a spiritual being, you may depend on that: With insistent iteration, I say he is not going to be a spirit in the dim, distant future; he is a spirit now, and he will remain such through time and all eternity. He is a deathless spirit, and that kindly experience we call death will neither change him, nor in any way modify the development of his career as a spiritual entity. The corpse is no indication of perished love, and the last tribute to the mortal remains of a friend does but enhance our appreciation of his living worth.

'Tis not the whole of life to live
Nor all of death to die.

The term “spiritual,” as I am at present using it, is applied to the supra-physical nature of man, to the fundamental groundwork of his being. In this sense of the word, one is understood to be a spiritual being even in the absence of those religious qualities which are comprehended in the term “spirituality.” That one does not pray or worship, or cultivate the graces

of charity or faith, makes no difference to the fact of his being a spirit, in spite of these lamentable omissions he is still immortal.

This, then, is the gist of the matter:

Life is ever lord of death
And love can never lose its own.


The old man dead is the man-child born; the lisping child of our affection, early withdrawn into the invisible, lives and grows; the shattered body of the fallen patriot does not represent the decease of his unconquerable spirit. The phrase "Killed in Battle" may serve the usage of this world, but in essential fact it is a misnomer. Sir Walter Raleigh was quite right:

Yet stab at thee who will,
No stab the soul can kill.

Not a single man of the millions who have fallen in battle is really killed. They do not die: They are not dead!

WHAT, THEN, IS DEATH ?

I

 HERE are two sides to every matter, and if we fail to regard both we are sure to form erroneous conclusions. This is particularly true in respect to death. From the viewpoint of this world, death seems to be the negation of life and a sinking into oblivion ; but, fortunately, there is a second and more illuminating point of view—that of the spiritual world—from which death is seen to be a triumph of life rather than its negation, and an attainment of a more exquisite consciousness instead of a descent into nothingness. Speaking strictly, there is no such thing as absolute death ; the one and only absolute thing is Life, and what we call death is one of its grand processes. The word “death,” in its common usage, and on account of its ominous associations, needs to be replaced by a term which accords better with the truth: Longfellow’s “transition” is more apt. Indeed, we

need an entirely new vocabulary in relation to our passage into spirit-life, and the old, faithless funereal customs should be replaced by ceremonies of a more heartening kind. When one of their number passed into the spiritual world, the early Christians donned bright array and held high festival; they did so because they looked upon death as resurrection; wherein they were wise.

Were we not supported by the hope of immortality, death as regarded from this side would seem to be a gruesome and depressing business. We should watch the progress of decease of a loved one with infinite sorrow. The gradual waning of bodily power and activity, the ever-increasing weakness and inability to articulate desire and thought, the refusal to accept nourishment, the slackening pulse, the last, laboured breathing, and the final quietness, would fill us with profound sadness. So, in the words of Browning, would death seem to be the "Pale priest of the mute people." But, fortunately for the anxious watcher at the bedside, there are, in most instances, occasional cheering, if somewhat awesome, foregleams of immortality. The person supposed to be dying evidently sees many things that we fail to see,

and we often hear fragments of conversation with friends invisible to us, and who we know have long since passed into spirit life. Sign upon sign is vouchsafed to us indicating that with growing bodily weakness and steadily approaching death, the spirit of the passing one becomes more and more alive and active in another sphere. Taking the numerous and extremely varied phenomena that are associated with death into account, we have much, indeed, to assure us that as the body weakens the spirit, the real man, strengthens, and that, with the progress of bodily death, the consciousness of a man is gradually and tenderly switched off its earthly connections, and is as gently switched on to contact with the environment of the spiritual world.

Whether it occur naturally, or if it be met violently in accident or battle, death will have exactly the same issue. The spirit suddenly and unexpectedly separated from the material body, will not be immediately plunged into a dazzling glory of light; it will gradually become aware of its new environment.

II



RESURRECTION is the real inwardness of death, and so it is perceived to be on the other side. When a friend passes on we feel the "sadness of farewell," but interested occupants of the spirit world have the intense joy of welcoming another being to the soul's true home. Our birth into this earthly world is anticipated with eagerness and care, and all who are concerned with it make it an occasion of the greatest tenderness. Our infantile helplessness and ignorance constitute a mute appeal to all that is gentle and protective, and the loving care that is bestowed upon us is beyond computation. Look where you will, in heaven or earth, can you find anything more sweetly appealing than the mother-love which yearns and broods over its progeny? It brings heaven and God very near to us, and we bow before it with reverent mien. Surely, the loving-kindness and tender carefulness, the constant forbearance, patience and protectiveness called into play by our helplessness are all sweet things. The spiritual world is occupied by beings fully as humane as ourselves, and more so, and if beings on earth

can exhibit such fine humanity to us when we are born here, are we unreasonable in concluding that loving attention of the sweetest kind will be extended to us when we are born into the new conditions of our spiritual heritage? It would be strange were it not so. In the spiritual world there are all sorts and conditions of men and women who have passed on from earth, and whose sympathies have become more exquisite, and among them there must be many who concern themselves with the constant stream of new arrivals, making their entrance into spirit-life easy and pleasant. Each spirit undergoing the great transition will become evident to these spiritual ministrants; they will see nothing of the laboured breathing and bodily decay that distress the watchers on this side, because they have no material sense by which they can be aware of them: all they will recognise is the real man, the spirit, growing into consciousness of the spiritual world, and they will rejoice at his safe arrival. They, too, will give instruction to the newly arrived, and care for him until he is prepared to go his own way.

We must look on both sides of death or else lapse into hopeless despair. And were we not so enslaved by materialism we might be actively

conscious of both sides; but we have become dwellers in the dust and, consequently see things "as in a glass, darkly." Perhaps our fairy legends and ancient traditions of immortality have come down to us from a remote period when some of our earliest forbears were normally conscious of the spiritual world. And, mayhap, the prophetic declaration, "There shall be no more death, neither crying, neither shall there be any more pain," will yet receive fulfilment in unborn generations of men whose inner perceptions are not dulled by an exaggerated sensuousness.

Tennyson, in his lines to mourners on the occasion of the death of the Duke of Clarence, expressed his sentiments in this wise:—

Yet be comforted;
For if this earth be ruled by Perfect Love,
Then, after his brief range of blameless days,
The toll of funeral in an Angel ear
Sounds happier than the merriest marriage bell.
The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life,
His shadow darkens earth: his truer name
Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the roll
And march of that Eternal Harmony
Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly heard
Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope!

The spirit finding utterance in such fine rhythm is altogether excellent and comforting, but it is

only the licence that is allowed the poet which permits such a notion as "The toll of funeral in an Angel ear." The funeral bell cannot be heard in the spiritual world: all the depressing paraphernalia of our burial practices are of the earth, earthy, and while we are paying our last tributes of respect to the mortal and rapidly disintegrating remains of a friend, his immortal self is being welcomed, with the most splendid hospitality, by kind souls in whose ears the joy-bells of Life are ringing, and to whom the dole of death is altogether foreign.

The term "Angel" demands some explanation. It has been customary to imagine that there is, in the spiritual world, a superior race of beings who know nothing of the grossness of earth, and who constitute a heavenly hierarchy, or a coterie of super-beings quite distinct from ordinary humanity. The belief has been fostered by poets and wrongful interpretation of Holy Writ. As a matter of fact, angels, in our Scriptures, are sometimes referred to as men, and all the parts and virtues therein attributed to them are distinctly human. The seer of Patmos, who was disposed to worship the angel who showed him so many wonders, was restrained from such action: the enlightened

one saying to him, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, *and of thy brethren the prophets*, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." How an angel who had not known earth, and the temptations and trials of humanity, could minister sympathetically to man, passes comprehension. "Angel" literally, means a messenger, and the term is really applied to "just men made perfect," spirits who once dwelt upon earth in a material body, but have since passed through death and the purifying fires of life. They have reached a degree of spiritual manhood which peculiarly qualifies them for employment as "ministering spirits." We can conceive of no occupants of the spiritual world who are not human, and who have not once been men on earth. And, necessarily, a personal Devil, who, according to a Miltonic conceit, is a fallen angel become the sworn enemy of God and man, is a mere fiction. The Lucifer of Holy Writ (Isaiah xiv.) was a figurative term applied to a king of Babylon. The writer of the noble hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light," gave us a truer and nobler conception of the angels:

And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

Could we see the other side of death, we should behold a fair vision of such angels, fine-souled, large-hearted and tenderly-affected human beings treating the new arrival with the most sympathetic concern:

Angels to beckon me,
Nearer, my God! to Thee,

is no sickly sentiment, but fact of the most practical kind. The heaven that "lies round us in our infancy," also encircles us on our arrival into the spirit realms, and, doubtless, the patriotic lads who have been given such quick shrift on the field of battle, have seen the beckoning fingers, and experienced the heavenward enticement.

III

DEATH, then, is a process of life, a veritable transition, and the existence which ceases in this world is continued, without break, in the next. As one has said, death is a continuation of life, and "when man dies he only passes from one world to another." The gross-feeding caterpillar, held to earth, ultimately becomes a

sunshine-loving, nectar-sipping, gaily bedizened creature of air : the chick breaks forth from the limiting egg-shell and discovers wider circumstance ; in the acorn is the promise of a mighty oak under whose grateful shade the cattle of many generations may find shelter. But man, the crowning triumph of creation, comes in another category : he fulfils his destiny, and finds his immortality, in the spiritual world ; he emerges from the chrysalis of this brief existence and discovers life and liberty where his spirit can reach its full expansion. This earth of ours is too small to admit of physical immortality ; it is only in a non-atomic realm, where space and time have no actuality, that there can be generous accommodation for the innumerable host of the immortals.

As a spirit, man already possesses a psychic body drawn from the substance of the spiritual world, and, when his transition takes place Life itself, through a spiritual attraction, and with the assistance of angelic ministrants, or nurses, gradually withdraws the psychic body from its connection with the material frame. While this is taking place the man himself is, as it were, asleep, and quite unconscious of the operation ; hence he will never recall it any more than he

recalls the business of his birth into this world. He experiences no pain in the process, and when he awakes in the spiritual world, he is, at first unaware that his transition has been accomplished. His form is the same as it was before, and his body as real: it is only when he reflects on his surroundings, and realises his new-found liberty and health, that he becomes fully aware of the change that has taken place.

IV



OUR human life, commenced here, is continued indefinitely under spirit-world conditions. The "Continuity" so cautiously yet persuasively argued for by Sir Oliver Lodge in his presidential address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, is a principle established in the nature of things. "The one life is continued into the other, and death is only the passage."

Death is another life. We bow our heads,
At going out, we think, and enter straight
Another golden chamber of the King's,
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.

Death ought not to be more astonishing than birth; it *is* a birth. It does not make a break in the chain of life, nor even a halt in our progress; it is a continuation, inevitable and altogether beneficent. All in us that is living continues to live, our personality survives and finds admission into conditions under which moral, intellectual and spiritual progress may proceed at an accelerated pace. Were death to change us, we should be recognised neither by ourselves or others. As it is death introduces us into the spiritual world exactly as it finds us: it is neither ameliorative nor punitive, nor is it a surgeon or a priest; it corrects no foibles, removes no bitterness, reproves no sin, changes no ambition. Immediately after death, we are, as spiritual beings, exactly what we were immediately before. We are as intensely human in form and character as we were, as loving and passionate, as wise or foolish, as sceptical or credulous, as devout or irreverent, as rational or bigoted. Death is a continuation of all that composes the warp and woof of our existence: it continues our hatreds as well as our loves, our greed and malice as well as our generosity and altruism.

Uninformed piety habitually exacts too much

of death; it demands that it should be the revealer of mysteries, the solver of problems, the settler of all doubt. Death no more introduces the atheist to the vision of God than the hypocritical pietist to the ways of sincerity. Our life is continued in a practical, work-a-day world, under human conditions similar to those we at present enjoy; there, as here, the vision of God depends upon the state of our spiritual culture, the discovery of secrets follows intellectual discipline and the earnest quest of facts, and our happiness depends upon our loving and faithful obedience to the laws of life.

“When man dies he only passes from one world into another:” just this; no more. John Smith is the same John Smith in the spirit-world; his journey there, by way of death, has not changed him any more than a trip to America. He is the same John Smith with the same kindliness that made us love him, and will still find him numerous friends. The spirit of devotion he displayed here has not been dissipated by death; he still loves and worships his Lord, and finds abundant scope for the service of his fellow spirits. The virtues which characterised him here will evolve in an orderly development in the spiritual world, and he will

naturally gravitate towards association with his like, and thus be strengthened and confirmed in his way of well-doing.

The gallant, patriotic boys who have found their entrance into spirit conditions by means of death in battle, cut off, as they seem to be, at an untimely moment, when life was so full of promise, are not dead; they cannot die. They live in our hearts and thoughts, and their valour and sacrifice are an ineffaceable memory. But they have personally survived what we call death, and are still just the boys we loved and worked for: the winsome boys, full of the joy of life, the love of life, and the strong ambition of youth. Broken as their mouldering bodies may be, their spirits are strong and sturdy, and their zest is as keen as ever. We are greatly mistaken if we think that death has cut short a career of great promise; it has done no such thing; the promise of life is still ahead, and glorious youth, notwithstanding death, is still stirred to the inmost soul by the watchword, *Excelsior!* In the spiritual world, our lads will find the most abundant scope for their superb energies, nor will they lack the restraining influences, the counsel and kindly sympathy of worthy friends. Although they will not return to us we shall go

to them; their very presence in the spirit-world gives us a more homely idea of it, and renders the thought of our own transition pleasant. It will be well for us, when the time comes, if we can show ourselves worthy of them, if we can match sacrifice with sacrifice, courage with courage, and dare to meet them with manly pride and happiness. What may they think if they detect in us a pitiable paltriness and signs of ignoble surrender?

Yes, we still see them in our fancy; in the quiet hour they come to us in thought:

We have oftimes seen their faces in the waning of the light,
Seen their dear familiar faces in the dreams that come by night;
Heard their voices in the morning as we heard in days of old—
Felt the pressure of their hands our eager hands enfold.

We shall meet them face to face—we shall know as we are
known—

And the waiting years shall seem but as a day that's flown;
But as a day that's flown the waiting years shall seem—
For as we met of old we shall meet again, I deem.


We are profoundly grateful to Kingsland for lines so expressive of our experience and sacred conviction.

What more could we reasonably ask of life, or of death, which is the servant of life, but that we should enter quietly, without blare of

trumpet, or dazzling glory of light, into our spiritual heritage? That our existence, and all that enters into it that is worthy, should be continued in a substantially human world is surely our heart's sincere desire. If there are graceless things in us that we would not willingly take with us, now is the time for their correction: should there be virtues we admire, but which, as yet, are not ours, let us to-day set about their cultivation. Life is ours to use, not to waste, and the best use to which we can put it lies in the development of humility, reverence, courtesy and goodwill, those sweet, sane things that make existence here worth while and immortality endurable.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

I

HE spiritual world, of which occasional, but imperfect, glimpses are obtained in the flesh, and of which we become fully aware after the transition of death, is a real world, and as substantial to our spiritual senses as the material world is to our physical senses. I have already indicated my conviction that this is so, but I now repeat it explicitly: it is absolutely necessary that we understand this, if we are to form any definite idea of life after death.

In our endeavour to mentally visualise the spiritual world, we must not permit our present experience of space and time to influence us. We cannot measure any part of that world by a material standard, nor will any mathematical calculation help us in regard to it. The physicist thinks of the imponderable ether of space as filling all space without being spatial; as being real without being atomic. Although

he cannot weigh or measure it, he does not doubt its actuality. Of its inward quality he knows nothing, but his ignorance in this respect does not prevent him from concluding that it is certainly as substantial as the atoms to which it seems to give birth. In physics, we appear to have reached a stage of thought in which matter, as we ordinarily observe it, is an emergence from a universal substance, of which it is a phenomenon. This substance pervades space and penetrates molecular matter, as well in huge masses as in the most microscopic portions. It fills the spaces between atoms equally as effectively as it fills the vast regions of space in the great universe: yet it is more than space, and completely transcends it. Sir Oliver Lodge, in his *Life and Matter*, says:

“It now appears that an atom may break up into electric charges, and these again may some day be found capable of resolving themselves into pristine ether. If so, then these also are temporary, and in the material universe it is the ether only which persists—the ether with such states of motion or strain as it eternally possesses—in which case the ether will have proved itself the material substratum and most fundamental known entity on that side.”

If, as there is excellent reason to believe, it is the ether only which persists, the ether which we cannot see or measure, and atoms merely "have their day and cease to be," then the words of Paul are applicable to material equally as well as to spiritual things: "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are unseen are eternal." And as there is an intimate relation between the unseen ether and visible matter, we have every reason to see new force in the statement, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."

All that we can, at present, know of the inner substances and forces of nature comes to us by means of the forms in which they are manifest to our senses; and, as to the spiritual realm, beyond the testimony of seers, we are dependent upon the display of its activities in material forms for evidence as to its nature and potency. Not only is the spirit-world invisible to our normal range of vision: man himself, as to his interior quality and all that is truly human in his personality, is invisible to his fellows: all that we see of him is his bodily presentation. We do not see his love or thought, the prime

elements of his personality, without which he would not be human, yet we are sufficiently appreciative of them as not to be doubtful of their existence. I cannot associate myself with those who declare that love, thought, and all the inner qualities of a human being are the effects of material organisation, the results of the mechanical and chemical activity of the brain; the latter is, more obviously, the instrument of the mind, which, in itself, though substantial, is immaterial. Love and thought are purely spiritual qualities, and, though we have evidence of them in mechanical acts, our sense and appreciation of them is spiritual. One thing is certain: he who denies the possibility of the existence of a spiritual realm inhabited by spiritual entities, in face of the most recent conclusions and pointers of physical science, is guilty of the grossest prejudice.

The calculated deductions of science stagger the imagination and transcend the wildest dreams of romance. Thus Professor W. S. Jevons, in his *Principles of Science*, says:

“Scientific method leads us to the inevitable conception of an infinite series of successive orders of infinitely small quantities. If so,

there is nothing improbable in the existence of a myriad universes within the compass of a needle's point, each with its stellar systems and its suns and planets in number and variety unlimited. Science does nothing to reduce the number of strange things we may believe."

Professor Du Bois declared, some years ago :


"We admit as a physical fact that, at least within certain undefined limits in our organism, matter obeys will, and brain particles move at the impulse of volition. Now, molecules, the physicist tells us, are separated by spaces indefinitely great as compared to the size of the molecules themselves, and these spaces are filled with ether. Within the limits of the cranium, then, we may conceive of a whole solar system in miniature. The whole great Universe with its suns and systems is represented in those tiny, whirling, moving brain particles. Now upon one of these little brain particles, separated by an immense relative distance from its neighbours, let us imagine a race of tiny, intelligent beings like ourselves, to live, One of these homuncules looks off from his tiny earth, with his tiny telescope, as we do from ours, and observes motions and bodies moving hither and thither."

Another quotation from Professor Jevons' *Principles of Science* is particularly appropos to our subject. Basing his conception upon the fact that molecules of matter are not in actual contact with each other, and that the spaces between them are filled with the imponderable ether, he says:

“For anything we can know to the contrary, there may be, right here and now, passing through us, and this world, some planet invisible to us, with mountains, oceans, lakes, cities, and inhabitants.”

Another writer, Dr. Young, suggests that “There are worlds, perhaps pervading each other, unseen and unknown, in the same space.” These well-founded speculations of trained scientists are so remarkable as to render the findings of Swedenborgian philosophy quite common-place.

II

HE ether is not a volatile essence or an attenuated form of matter; it is generally agreed that it is an omnipresent, remarkably dense, frictionless medium, the very substratum of atomic existence. The phenomena of magnetism and electricity are associated with it, and what we term light is our sensation of etheric ripples or vibrations. I have introduced this wonderful substance into the present discussion in order to indicate that we realise the being and existence of a medium of vital activity which does not respond to ordinary chemical or physical tests. This realisation renders belief in spiritual substance, entering into the constitution of the spiritual world and our spirit bodies, far more easy than was formerly the case.

But we must not hasten to ill-considered conclusions. With such as regard the ether as Divine Substance I cannot agree, nor am I disposed to think, with a certain writer, that "it is God's most universal, intimate, and primal self-expression." In our view, the ether is not even spirit: it is matter, and, for our present

purpose, may be defined as the inner and universal substance of nature. It certainly seems to bring us to the borderland of spirit, and, perhaps, it is a medium "Of the finer substance of nature," in an investment of which spiritual entities appear under certain circumstances. Moreover, it is reasonable to think that the ether is the means by which spirit is held in vital connection with matter in its grosser form. Thus, matter is dominated by spirit even as the material body of man is dominated by his mind; and the phenomena of the material world are simply effects of vital spiritual causes. The electric activity of the ether is interior to the material atom, and spiritual substance with its vitality is interior to the ether, and the cause of its wonderful electric qualities. Electricity is not life, but only a manifestation of life in the material realm. Spiritual substance alone is *living* and the cause of


The rushing metamorphosis
Dissolving all that fixture is,
Melts things that be to things that seem,
And solid nature to a dream.

We are now enabled to judge, not according to appearances, but righteous judgment. What

seems to our natural senses to be real and solid—atomic matter—is less real than the ether which holds it in being, and the ether, in its turn, is indebted to a substance even more real for its being and potency, and that substance is living spirit. This is the substance of the spiritual world, the stuff of reality from which we, as spiritual beings, are elaborated; it is the solid basis of our spiritual life and activity, and the stuff of which all the glory and circumstance, the forms and scenery of the spiritual world, now appreciated by our departed friends, are composed. Death is the continuation of life, only in another world, and that world abides even if

Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.

III

S we have already seen, it is the *personal* survival of bodily death that constitutes our immortality; we must be ourselves in the spiritual world; our identity must be preserved if continued existence is to be satisfactory. Similarly, the spiritual world itself must be like this world if it is to be a homely, human habitation. If death transfers us to an environment altogether dissimilar to that we are at present acquainted with, we shall certainly be strangers in a strange land. But there is every reason to believe that the spiritual world is causal to the natural world, that the circumstance of our natural life is the outer garb and presentation of the spiritual realm. As "soul is form and doth the body make," so is the spirit-world the form and idea upon which the natural world is built. The spiritual differs only in quality from the natural; it is similar to it in character, but not in substance; the one corresponds to the other. It is evident that Milton had a perception of this intimate correspondence between the spiritual

and natural worlds, or he would not have asked the question :

What if earth

Be but the shadow of heaven, and the things therein

Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?

All who have claimed seership, and, as we have seen, we cannot afford to ignore their evidence, are agreed that the spiritual world is, to their perception, remarkably like to this mundane realm. It is a world of solid ground upon which spiritual beings can walk, and from which they can extract such substances as are valuable to them in their various activities. They find materials for the erection of houses, temples, halls and buildings of all kinds. There is a perfect mineral kingdom formed of diversified spiritual substance. It is, further, a world of mountains, hills, valleys, and streams; the ground produces grasses, trees, shrubs, flowers, and fruits; the inhabitants form gardens and cultivate fields, and are able to enjoy the sight of a variety of landscapes. Birds fly in the air, and various animals walk the earth. There is a spiritual sun which is recognised as the source of life and energy, and the cause of all growth. It is a world of life, light, and intense activity.

The student has his spiritual books, the scientist engages in such researches as are congenial to him, the poet, musician, and artist have all necessary means for the exercise of their craft. Every human activity of which we can think in this world assumes a corresponding form in the spiritual realm. There is in the spirit-world a counterpart of everything that exists here, and, over and beyond this, a host of wonderful phenomena which, here, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man."

Let there be no mistake: the spiritual world is all, and more, than I have stated; it is truly *objective* to the consciousness of its inhabitants, but it is as different from the material world as the human spirit is different from its material mechanism—the physical body: yea, every whit as different as the thought images in the author's mind are from this printed page which represents them. Thought is a spiritual activity, very real indeed, and of it the printed page is a mere effigy. And do not complain that I am materialising the spiritual world, for the world of which we are now conscious is really its materialisation. I am simply avoiding a too common error, a fallacy under the influence of

which so many have conceived of spirit as being so sublimated that it amounts to no more than an abstraction. The spiritual world is substantial, not abstract: if we deny substance and form to it, we take away its reality; and if we do not allow spiritual beings to be solidly human, and capable of using spiritual substances for human purposes, we virtually take away their existence. We may, if we are so disposed, affirm the existence of an abstract world, but we cannot possibly describe it, for, it being unsubstantial and formless, without part nor quality, there is nothing to appeal to our imagination, nothing to describe. In fact, an abstract world is no world at all.

So we say the spiritual world is "a real world, composed of all the forms that are necessary to constitute a world. It is objective to the senses of those who dwell in it, and far more distinct, substantial, and real to them than this world is to us. And yet it is not material, but is as distinct from every form of matter as the soul is from the body." Our departed heroes are not mere ghosts in eternal vacuity, but real men following out careers of great usefulness in a real world.


IV



ONVINCED of the solid reality of the spiritual world, we naturally ask ourselves, Where is it? Is it in the heights above? Or in the depths beneath? The answer is quite simple: it is where we are; it is here, there, and everywhere. For every material world there is a corresponding spiritual world which has brought it into being. Seeing that there are innumerable material worlds, so are there innumerable spiritual worlds; and as atomic matter is, as it were, a condensation from the ether, so are all these spiritual worlds condensations from a universal spiritual substance in which they live, move, and have their being. The spiritual world in which we are specially interested is that which is in association with this earth, which brought it into being, and holds it in being. It is *in* this world, *around* this world, yet *not* this world. It is immanent in nature, yet it transcends it. Although we are unconscious of the fact, we are even now in the spiritual world. Conscious as we are of time, we are truly, even as we live here, immortal beings in eternity.

The spiritual world is "nearer to us than breathing, closer than hands and feet." The veil between our *awareness* of this world, and of that, is very thin; it is sometimes slightly drawn aside, enabling us to get a faint glimpse of the glory beyond, and kindly death removes it completely.

V

HEN, if the spiritual world is so near and so real, Why do we not see it constantly? Mayhap because our hearts are waxed gross, our ears are dull of hearing, and our eyes have been closed. Our life and outlook is very materialistic, and possibly our sheer materialism blinds us to the vision splendid. Be that as it may, the spiritual world can be seen only by spiritual eyes, and, in practice, these are opened by death. Common-sense tells us not to deny the existence of that which we cannot see. The blind man cannot see the material world, but he does not deny its existence; the chick in the egg-shell, when the time is ripe, breaks out into a larger environment than it was aware of while in that shell;

we know of the existence of the famous X-rays, but cannot see them.

A very slight improvement of the sensitiveness of the physical eye might enable us to visualise a vast realm to which we are now blind. There is an extensive scale of etheric ripples and vibrations, actuated by mysterious energies productive of various phenomena. At the bottom of this scale there are some octaves of electric waves of great length, while at the top of the scale there are a series of ripples of very short wave-length producing the phenomena of light; the latter are represented by only three octaves on the imaginary scale of twenty-seven octaves, and of these three, only one—that of the various wave-lengths producing the visible spectrum—awakens a response in the human eye. At the bottom of the spectrum, the waves that produce the sensation of red number about 34,000 to the inch, while at the top of the spectrum, waves giving the sensation of violet number about 64,000 to the inch. The eye, be it repeated, is sensitive only to this single octave; but beyond this there are two other octaves of much shorter wave-lengths, vibrating much more rapidly than all other etheric ripples, to which the eye is blind, but which, curiously

enough, produce a marked effect on a photographic plate. This means that a photographic plate, properly sensitised, responds to vibrations in the ether to which the eye is insensible. These ripples are those of what is known as ultra-violet light. Suppose, now, that the eye were as sensitive as the photographic plate. That would mean that our outlook on nature would be greatly extended, if not revolutionised.

I do not suggest that increased sensitivity of the physical eye would enable us to visualise the spiritual world; far from it; but it might bring us into recognition of some of the finer substances of nature which occupy the borderland between matter and spirit. Perhaps what is commonly known as clairvoyance, as well as other curious psychic phenomena, are partly accounted for by special or abnormal range of eye-sensitiveness. While the actual eye of the spirit may occasionally be opened, many of the psychic phenomena to which I refer seem to be referable to a borderland region rather than to the spiritual realm purely and simply. In this connection, I cannot abstain from quoting some sentences published by a certain Rev. Thomas Hartley, so far back as 1778. Treating of both

the material and the spiritual worlds, and their inter-relationship, he wrote :

“ We may from analogy conclude . . . that the most refined part of the material meets the grossest part of the immaterial system of beings, visible thus ending where invisible begins ; and consequently, that there are spirits very near to us, though not discernible by us, except when according to certain unknown laws of their existence, they become manifested to us, either visibly or audibly. . . . And who will say, that the natural eye of man is incapable of such further assistance, as may enable us to discern the subtle vehicles of certain spirits, . . . consisting . . . of ether.”

One thing is evident from our various considerations: what to our natural senses seems real belongs rather to the region of the seeming and the ephemeral; and what, to the same senses seems unreal, even phantasmal, is, in truth, the greatest reality. We discover reality in the spiritual realm, nowhere else.

THE CONTINUATION OF LIFE

I



AS a spiritual being, man, in this world and in the spiritual realm, is subject to spiritual law. Most of us remember the intense interest that was aroused among thoughtful circles by the publication of Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. In that remarkable volume the author reasoned most persuasively in favour of the continuity of law, as we note it here, in the region of spirit. He got a fine glimpse of a grand truth, and enabled many of us to discern order in a realm concerning which our thoughts had hitherto been in a state of chaos. But, in all probability, had Drummond written in more recent times he would have stated his case somewhat differently; regarding things from their true inwardness, he would have treated of spiritual law in the natural world. Natural law is not extended into the spiritual realm, for what we term natural law is really an extension of spiritual law into the plane of that which we recognise as nature. As

we have seen, spirit is interior to matter and fundamental to its existence. Take away spirit, and matter is impossible; but the disappearance of a material body in which a spiritual form resides does not involve the annihilation of the said spiritual form. The forces and energies of life are resident in spirit, and they operate according to spiritual law. Interiorly, spiritual law and natural law are identical, the phenomena of nature being but a material presentation of spiritual activities. But the subject of spiritual law in the realm of physics is a big one, and its discussion would lead beyond the purpose immediately before us: we are specially concerned with the dominance of spiritual law in human nature, and our purpose now is to show that death will not stop its activity. All which means that the psychology of man here is identical with the psychology of the hereafter.

While in the flesh we are subject to spiritual laws and forces, and death makes no break in the continuity of their operation. Death does not destroy the human will or dislocate the multitudinous activities of the intellect, for will and intellect are of the spirit. Our native inclinations and distinctions of character remain untouched by death, and hereafter, as here, our

response to the stimulus of environment, and our behaviour generally, depend upon the bias of our individuality. This being so, with the recognition of the continuity of spiritual law, we are able to anticipate human behaviour in the circumstances of spirit-life. And as, according to observation here, the moral and spiritual life of man is subject to the law of development, so we may conclude that developments initiated in this world, if they are really dominating determinants of character, will be evolved, to their logical issue, in the spiritual realm. We must be prepared to interpret our spirit-life in terms of character, for it is character which determines our future weal or woe. After all, the foundations of our eternity are laid during our brief existence in this mundane realm. All human qualities, be they good or bad, survive death, simply because they are properties of the immortal spirit. Hence love and hatred, kindness and ill-will, sympathy and callousness, honesty and dishonesty, greed and generosity, amiableness and disagreeableness, selfishness and altruism, rectitude and falseness, are all discoverable in the spiritual world, although, as we shall yet see, a time arrives for the segregation of the good and the evil. Death does not con-

vert a blackguard into an angel of light, and no pronouncement of a theological shibboleth under stress of sickness or death will alter, in any degree whatsoever, the fixed disposition of the deathless spirit. As we have already learned, death, as a process of life, accomplishes no more than our transition from one world to another: Longfellow was under a misapprehension when he penned the lines:


Death, the consoler,
Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed it forever—

for a mere process is not a personal thing; it can neither console nor heal. And Shakespeare asks too much in the line,

Then death rock me asleep, abridge my doleful days—

because death rocks no man asleep; it, rather, renders one more actively awake; and, instead of providing a way out from the disabilities of a doleful disposition, simply transfers the disposition itself. Death does not "minister to a mind diseased," and he who thinks to escape therefrom by suicide labours under a delusion. But what death cannot accomplish, Life may: the consolation, health and peace that we yearn for may be ours after death if we are prepared to yield obedience to spiritual law.

II

O after death we shall retain our liberty of action, and continue to behave ourselves according to our usual wont. We shall respond to the advances of our fellow immortals with frankness or suspicion, artlessness or guile, just as we are natively inclined; our general behaviour will be determined by our individuality and disposition. I have already alluded to the kindly ministrations which are extended to those who are undergoing the great transition; to the gracious beings who make it their delight to assist at our birth into full spirit-conditions. These ministrants are of the noblest and the best, as we might expect, and their influence will be such as tends towards protection from hurtful associations. But what will be the response of a given individual to their gracious sympathy and gentle leading? This, of course, depends upon his disposition. Setting aside, for the nonce, all thought of the future life, let each reader think how he would act, in the freedom of the present existence, in response to the kindly and well-meant advances of a few men and women who would fain lead him in the

ways of a wise and holy life. One might gladly welcome any such advances and eagerly follow the wise course indicated. But another, not being of the same disposition, might feel quite uneasy in the presence of a coterie of lofty characters, and find an early excuse to say Goodbye. He would find himself much more at-home in the society of beings of a different order. As a matter of fact, in this world we like to choose our own company and feel comfortable only in society and surroundings that are congenial to our taste. In this regard we act according to a spiritual law under which like draws to like, and the unlike is repelled. The same law obtains in the spiritual world. If we are inwardly like to the gracious ministrants who assist at our transition, we shall most certainly welcome their sympathy and guidance, and gladly associate ourselves with their aims and ideals: nothing will please us better than to go where they go, and live as they live. But, if their sphere is not ours, no matter how appreciative we may be of their kindness and goodness, we shall not desire to stay long in their company, and they, on their part, by a quick intuition, will understand our condition and relieve us of their embarrassing presence.

Seeing that the spiritual world is inhabited by human beings with truly human sympathies, we can expect no other than that a welcome will be extended to the new arrivals. This is an ordinary human courtesy. And it is only natural to anticipate that the older inhabitants will feel impelled to make advances to the newcomers. And we may rest assured that if we do not welcome the advances of those who first approach us, we shall not be left long in solitude. Other beings, of a different character, will approach us, and we may find them to be quite congenial; if not, they, too, will retire and yield place to still others. In the end, we shall certainly find ourselves in association with spirits after our own hearts. There is nothing extraordinary in all this; it is just the human way of things, and we could not desire a better.

Once we have realised the full fact of our transition, and that we are free beings in a real world, we shall behave with our usual freedom. Suppose that a man were transported during a deep sleep to America, and awakened soon after his arrival. He would surely be told where he was, and on realising the fact, he would gladly accept the offer of a reliable person to show him the sights. He would soon bethink him of the

friends he had in America, and, if anxious to see them, would seek them out. That would be the behaviour of an ordinary human being. And, we may anticipate, the same curiosity and affection will animate us on our arrival in the spirit-world. When we find ourselves there, we shall be told where we are, and we shall exercise our usual prudence with regard to the advances made to us. We shall be curious as to our surroundings and wishful to see the sights. We shall remember old friends and relatives, and if we wish to see them, we shall seek them out. But under the law of spirit, earnest desire to be in the presence of loved ones establishes immediate presence, because, in the spiritual world, space and time are mere appearances, speedily dissipated by the activity of love and thought. This is not so extraordinary a statement as it may at first appear. Is it not a fact that under spiritual law in this world, love out-distances space and time? Can we not mentally visualise friends, and sense their quality, no matter where they may be? Even here, those we really love are always spiritually near, providing that they reciprocate our love, for space and time do not sever the bonds of the spirit. A true state of nearness, in any circumstances, is not a matter

of space, but a state of similarity of disposition. We rub shoulders daily with persons who, in spite of their proximity in space, are spiritually at an immense distance from us. The associations of the spiritual world are determined according to the laws of spirit: they who are unanimous are together, and dissimilarity of disposition establishes distance. Quite apart from persons, that in which we are interested is close to our attention, and that which makes no particular appeal to our interest is far away. Everything depends upon our mental attitude. Another fact of our present experience is worth noting in this connection. Our sense of the passage of time is closely related to our state of mind. The hands of the clock circle too rapidly for us in conditions of intense enjoyment; but their movement is too slow in states of anxious anticipation. Time seems to pass slowly when we are waiting for a train, but far too rapidly when we are anxious to catch one. One might adduce several experiences in further illustration of this fact, but there is no need to labour proof of that which is self-evident. It is obvious that, in the realm of spirit, consciousness of time is dependent on mental states, and that, in the same region, time is more seeming than real.

Quite recently I met a friend whom I had not seen for twenty years. After the first greetings I remarked, "You are just as I remember you; you have not altered in any way." The reply was a denial of my statement, and I was soon shown proof of considerable change. Now, why should my first impression be so wrong? At first I really saw no change. The fact of the matter was that I saw my friend in the light of my memory impressions of him: I associated a mental image that I had carried with me with a changed person; I saw him according to my thought of him, and not as he actually was. I have noted this phenomenon on several occasions, and believe it to be quite common to human experience. Evidently, it is a fact of the mind, and therefore of the spirit, that we first see a person according to our thought, and afterwards as he is. This enables us to overcome a particular anxiety with regard to our recognition of friends who have long preceded us in departure from this world. We naturally think that residence in the spirit realm will have involved both inward and outward changes, perhaps to such an extent as to carry our friends beyond possibility of recognition. And, doubtless, our friends in the eternal world have developed, and their outward appear-

ance will really conform to their inward state of mind. But when, according to our express desire, we find ourselves in their presence, we shall see them exactly as we remember them, not as they actually are. Ultimately our memory impression will give place to that closer scrutiny which will disclose their actual appearance. Thus memory establishes a point of contact and makes recognition possible. It is a wonderful and beneficent arrangement. Anxious ones here, lamenting the departure of the lads who have fallen in battle, may take comfort; they have not changed so as to be beyond our ken :

We shall meet them face to face—we shall know as we are known.

The same law of recognition will operate with our departed when they behold us. The years bring changes, both in character and in form, but they will recognise us by their memory of us.

Of course, there must be full opportunity for retirement and privacy in the spiritual world. Much as we love our friends we shall not always desire to be with them. We shall be on mutual visiting terms, enjoying the delights of society when we are so disposed, and appreciating the pleasures of solitude when we will. This must be so, if, as we believe, our present disposition and habit are continued in the hereafter.

III

MEMORY is a capacity of the living spirit, and so survives bodily death. The laws which regulate memory in our present existence will continue to operate in the eternal world. Memory is a store of mental impressions which are well-defined, or diffuse and vague, in proportion to the degree of our observation of facts. Concentrated observation yields deep memory-impressions; fleeting and barely-noticed experiences, which arouse no deep thought, although they do impress the memory, speedily pass into oblivion or something approaching thereto. We have memories that we may distinguish as internal and external. External memories are such as have not entered into our life, hence they tend to fade. But a memory becomes internal when it is made the subject of thought and reflection, and we endeavour to intellectually appreciate its implications. If we wish to make truth a part of ourselves, and our eternal possession, we have to do more than commit it to memory, or learn it by rote: we must think about it, reason on it, and take it to our hearts. What


we love is indelibly impressed on our internal memory and can never be blotted out. It is the internal memory that is active after death, because it serves the spirit in its various associations: the external memory is retained, but becomes quiescent, except in so far as its impressions are reflected upon and put to use, because it is applicable, generally speaking, only to the uses of life in the material realm. By the association of ideas, when we entertain a particular subject, many things related to the subject are recalled—things which have not entered our thought perhaps for a long while; we see, for the time being, things which have been in the limbo of forgetfulness, and see them with great clarity. There is what we may call a recession of memories; even clear-cut memory-impressions, that we might expect to be almost always present, quickly pass into the region of the subconscious; they are not lost, but return when they are needed in the processes of reason and thought. The mind is not intended to be occupied entirely by what has passed; it has to be busy with the living present, and have an eye to the immediate future. Past experience has value only in its bearing on present issues. We need not be alarmed, then, but ought to be

greatly delighted, that in the matter of memory, as in all the activities of the mind, we shall behave in the spiritual world as we do here. The bereaved mother will find satisfaction in the fact that her impression is indelibly engraved on the memory of her departed soldier son, but she will not be so unreasonable as to expect that he will think of her and nothing else. His mind will be busy with many matters in his new environment, and it will be only during moments of meditation and reflection, and by the suggestion of certain circumstances, that his mother's image will be recalled. We can love intensely even during preoccupation and apparent forgetfulness. Even mother-love has to be busy with, and think of, many things, quite apart from the object of her heart's devotion.

On our part, the memory of our departed dear ones becomes less and less acute with the passage of time. The first, sharp sting of bereavement loses its power, and sorrow mellows into a sweet thing. The affairs of this world claim us, new interests absorb our attention, and it is but now and then that we think of those we love in the great beyond. Our sons here leave home, become occupied with duties and associates, and think of us only when occasion arises: we make

no complaint on that account, for we know that it is inevitable. As here, so in the hereafter; we shall remember as we now remember, and forget as we now forget.

IV

HE reader will, surely, not be shocked when I declare that relationship in the spiritual world is of the spirit, not of the flesh. The declaration carries reason on the face of it, for the fact is a matter of experience here. Family ties are in some instances very real, but in many cases they are palpably only legal, conventional and superficial. Intimate soul relationship is commonly sought and found outside the family circle, and, in practice, blood relationship does not invariably yield community of thought, aspiration and character. A David finds a Jonathan who is spiritually closer to him than a brother, and who loves him as he loves his own soul. And Jesus indicated a wonderful spiritual brotherhood in His memorable reply to those who interrupted Him in His work by the declaration that His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with

Him: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" He asked. Then pointing to His disciples, He said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Family loyalty is a fine thing and worthy of all encouragement, but the members of any family circle are not alike in temperament or mental outlook, and it invariably happens that each individual forms his own circle of friends and intimates outside of the domestic community. We find no fault with this state of things; we take it for granted, and even rejoice in it, because we realise that it tends to wider experience, broader thought, and the defeat of stupid prejudice. A condition which contents us in our present life ought certainly to please us in its inevitable continuation in the spiritual world. Let us be happy in the thought that the departed ones are as near to us in spirit as they ever have been, or could be; that all that is really theirs infallibly gravitates to them; that they have spiritual friends who contribute to their progress and joy of living.

V



AFTER death we shall see what we are prepared to see. We need not anticipate that all truth will flash across our mental vision in a blaze of dazzling light. At present we learn life's lessons very slowly, "line upon line, and precept upon precept," and find slow but sure progress is best calculated to be permanent. Some learn more quickly than others, but none plumb the full depths of truth. There is always more to be learned, and at every step in our education we discover new aspects of truth and fresh problems to solve. Education and development of character are continued in the other life on the same principles as have proved effective on earth, and rapidity of progress depends upon our docility and mental aptitude. Death reveals nothing but our deathlessness; it does not suddenly plunge us into the heart and solution of what many are pleased to call the "Great Mystery." Nor does death introduce us into the Great Presence, for in the spiritual world, as in this, we see God subjectively—see Him in the disclosures of His Wisdom, in the operation

of His Law, in the manifestations of His Love. And, as thoughtful folk realise, the subjective appreciation of the Divine in its expression depends upon the state of our spiritual culture and preparedness. No man, either in this world or in the spiritual, can see the Infinite as it is in itself, but every man is so constituted that he may, if he is so disposed, by a rational interpretation of spiritual phenomena, see God in His Providence. Any objective vision of God, supposing it possible, would be a constraint upon our freedom: we should tremble in the Fearful Presence and yield the homage of slaves. Far better for us to have the inner vision, to see God in His Laws and to obey them not because we must, but because we may. We wish the lads who are pouring into the spiritual world, in consequence of the war, to be reverent and wise, to realise the things that belong to their peace, but cannot desire that they should be terrorised into worship, and rendered abject in their obedience to Divine law. The volunteer is of far greater worth than the pressed man, and it is a law of God that no man, in this world or any other, should be forced into His service.

It is the predisposition of the mind that

determines what we see in the spiritual world. In regard to matters of deep religious purport, as well as in reference to other things, there is perennial truth in the utterance of Jesus: "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." Prejudice closes the understanding, and renders impossible the perception of truths that are beyond the pale of our prejudice. Of His immediate followers, Jesus said: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." Interest and a spirit of enquiry lead to the acquisition of knowledge and the perception of truth; on the reverse, if we are indifferent to truth and bigoted, we are bound to remain ignorant and lacking in perception. We know that the man of alert and enquiring mind, who has "eyes to see," makes great strides in knowledge, and discovers interesting facts at every step he takes. The trained naturalist extracts intense enjoyment out of a walk by hedgerow or seashore; he perceives a wealth of life-forms everywhere, and few details escape his attention. He sees what he is prepared by his training to observe, but the individual who has no such training passes a thousand interesting objects with unseeing eye. The geologist is

specially interested in the rocks and their story, and in his eagerness to examine geological phenomena tends to ignore other subjects; the same is true of other experts; predisposition influences us to magnify the importance of our particular interests, and to be unobservant of whatever seems to have no immediate relation to them. But while we take special note of things that interest us, and seek them out, we are not unaware of the existence of other things. The eye comprehends that which lies between it and the horizon in a general glance; but it takes particular note of specially interesting objects and circumstances; and, as has been observed, interest is dictated by predisposition. The story of *Eyes, and No-Eyes*, is acted on this earth to perfection. "Eyes" observes a wealth of detail everywhere, but "No-Eyes" wanders about with uncomprehending vision. The artist is moved by beauty, colour, flowing curves and atmospheric tones; the poet sees in the meanest flower that blows "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears;" the scientist is overjoyed at the discovery of some new fact; the philosopher engages in the quest of wisdom, and the man of religion sees "sermons in stones, and good in everything." In every instance

we note the influence of predisposition and intellectual preparedness. And their influence is not overthrown by death; it is continued in our after-life.

Let us take a concrete example. I believe there still exist men and women who actually expect that religion in the other world takes the form of everlasting prayer meetings, love-feasts, hymn-singings and musical services. Possibly they consider that their notion is supported by certain passages in the Apocalypse, to which they give a too matter-of-fact, unimaginative interpretation. Be that as it may, such persons enter conscious life in the spiritual world with a predisposition in favour of their curious notion. They must, therefore, seek the heaven of their preconceived idea, and they are permitted to indulge in that form of religious activity. They find what they expect to find, and their thoughts are so occupied with its obsession, that they fail to comprehend a world of things outside of their peculiar interest. But hard experience is a wonderful corrective of vain fallacies; after a more or less prolonged practice of their idea, they discover that music may become monotonous, prayer meetings dull if too protracted, hymn-singing uninspired if indulged in for days

together, and sermons wearisome when they threaten to be interminable. In due course they learn that it is possible to have too much even of a good thing, that life without variety is a dull affair, and that religion means much more than mere prayer and praise. Doubtless, there are religious observances in the spiritual world; human nature would not be fully catered for without them; and these observances will vary according to differing predilections. But whatever be the creed or ritual, they who are wise will realise that religion is more than a form or a creed; it is a life, for "All religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good." Experience in the other life will lead us to scrap many foolish notions, and to appreciate the fact that the spiritual world is intensely human, providing opportunity for every imaginable human activity.

VI



VERY man has his most private, internal life and thought, which he is chary of exhibiting to the world, and with which his public conversation and deeds are not invariably in harmony. Many a fine, brotherly spirit is hidden beneath a rough exterior, and, on the reverse, we are not unaware of the fact that a smooth, ingratiating exterior frequently covers a mean, selfish, designing character:

A goodly apple rotten at the heart,
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath !

We have a secret nature which is the abode of our ruling passion and motive and the hidden thoughts which they engender; and we also possess an outer man which is apt to conform to the usages of society and present a fair and respectable face to our fellows. Our real character is determined by our ruling love and interior quality. Regarding human nature from outward appearances, it seems to us that it is a strange mixture of conflicting elements: good and evil, selfishness and altruism, falsehood and

truthfulness are all in evidence: at one time we rise to great height of self-sacrifice, at another we descend to deeds that are unspeakably mean. Can any sort of order be resolved out of this seeming tissue of contradictions? Certainly it can; and as our life advances we are able to detect the process in its operation. Predominant good asserts its ascendancy, and evil becomes less and less in evidence. Hidden thought and motives betray themselves in deeds that harmonise with them. Fundamental qualities of character establish our real and perennial manhood, and external, superficial idiosyncracies fail to blind us to genuine worth. The ruling passion, however secret, attracts to itself all desire and thought, all memories and ideas that are related to itself; moulds them according to its own pattern, bends all the capacities of the mind to its hidden purpose, and thus settles the kind of men we are to be. The man who is inwardly selfish, and attempts to hide his selfishness beneath a cloak of good manners and respectable practices, usually betrays himself in the course of time; in the end his character is portrayed in his physiognomy, and his dominating selfhood becomes writ large in his every word and act. In estimating the quality

of human deeds, a wise and humane judge endeavours to probe the mysterious motives that prompt them; he knows that all acts have a certain inwardness, and, in all charity, he is disposed to follow the advice of Burns:

Then gently scan your brother Man;
 Still gentler sister Woman;
 Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
 To step aside is human:
 One point must still be greatly dark,
 The moving *Why* they do it;
 And just as lamely can ye mark,
 How far perhaps they rue it.

And a greater than Burns exhorted men to "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

Notwithstanding the fact that, as years advance, the inward character of a man tends to express itself in face and form, in word and deed, it is doubtful if in any instance in this world there is a perfect adjustment of internal and external factors. We always retain an aptitude for dissimulation in some degree. Marcus Aurelius declared that "A man's whole soul and character are seen in his face": this, according to our earthly experience, is hardly true, for there are always some interior aspects of the soul which remain successfully hidden.

But if the dictum of the imperial Roman author is not entirely justified by our worldly observation, it is certainly an intelligent anticipation of spirit-world conditions. It is in obedience to a spiritual law that here the inner character tends to impress itself on one's physiognomy, and, seeing that the operation of any spiritual law is not interfered with by death, we have every assurance that the tendency with which we are familiar will reach its logical issue in the eternal world. This, of course, means that in that world, soon after transition, dominant character will be perfectly represented by our external form; that the ruling love will be evident in every act; that the interior thought will be writ large in every feature. The substance of the spiritual body is more plastic than that of the material body; hence it is the more easily moulded into a form and expression fully harmonising with the mind. Transparency of soul is a common-place of spirit-life.

However, one does not anticipate that there will be no possibility of privacy of thought and affection; we do not spend the bulk of our life here in the profitless and disagreeable researches of a Paul Pry, for it is only on special occasions that we need to enquire into an individual's

motives. Generally, we take folk as we find them, allow them to have their private feelings and thoughts, and demand no uncomfortable explanations. By a swift intuition we usually realise whether a person is trustworthy or no. We shall act just as humanly and in as ordinary a manner in the spiritual world. There, although inner character presents itself in outer form, we shall be sufficiently well-mannered not to subject every person we meet to a withering scrutiny; and we shall take careful note of individual character only when intimate relationships demand it. We may, also, expect that in the other world intuition will be developed to the greatest perfection, and, quite apart from estimates based on appearances, we shall realise, by intuition, whether spirits with whom we become acquainted would prove congenial friends.

It is in the spiritual world that the statement of Jesus is proved to be absolute fact: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hidden, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops." Immediately after death man appears in a form similar to

that which he possessed in this world, and, for a time, he is able to hide his real nature: but when he realises that he is in full freedom in a real world, and can live according to his desires without undue constraint, his dominant characteristics become intensely active. He lives the life of his ruling love, and, because of the extremely plastic nature of his spiritual body, it is rapidly moulded into the form of his mind, and thus comes to give an outward presentation of his real self. Thus, the covered things are revealed, and the hidden things made known: and all who have the right to explore his character can readily do so. The memory of man is his book of life, and existence itself is the recording angel. Every desire and thought, every experience and act is impressed on the memory and recorded there indelibly. If one, in the spiritual world, tries to hide the truth, or to dissimulate in any way, his memory gives him the lie, for it is a living bioscope, capable of reproducing in vivid form everything that it has recorded. We are not to think that we are to be eternally haunted and affronted by our chequered record: this can happen only when circumstances set the bioscope in motion. Here, we are so busy with the present that we are

seldom troubled by haunting memories; hereafter, our life will proceed on the same lines.


The word "judgment" does not bear the most pleasant savour: it conjures up visions of the bar of human justice, and suggests the terrors of human law. By an erroneous interpretation, well-meaning but unpoetic religionists have transferred the earthly police-court to the spiritual world, and have given us a picture of the judgments of God being enacted after a distinctly human fashion. Their imagination sets up the Divine Being as a frowning judge in whose awesome presence defaulting men and women are arraigned. Such exponents make no allowance for the sublime imagery of Holy Writ, and fail to appreciate the meaning of the recorder who, in reference to the Great Teacher, said, "Without a parable spake He not unto them." In point of fact, in the eternal world, the sheep and the goats are segregated in a very practical and effective manner. The judgment of God is the decision of character against which there can be no possible appeal. The decree of character is unalterable, and the law of spiritual development shows no favour, no respect of persons, no caprice. The sheep are separated from the goats by their native inclination to

associate with their like ; and the goats form their own coterie apart from the sheep, because they prefer their own company. The arrangement is satisfactory to all concerned and could not be improved in any particular : it is perfectly just.

Before a man takes his own proper place in society and surroundings congenial to him in the spiritual world, the decision of character, just referred to, must be fully established ; and it is in this connection that we see the significance and wisdom of the law which decrees that the real nature of an individual should be so impressed on his outward form, and be so apparent in his actions, that dissimulation and hypocrisy are practically impossible. In the course of the developments which lead to this conclusion, the inner and eternal disposition becomes more and more accentuated ; it draws to itself everything that will strengthen it, and repels everything for which it has no abiding use. Thus superficial mannerisms and merely accretionary elements in the outer man are laid aside. The really virtuous become confirmed in their peculiar quality of virtue, and are relieved of errors of thought and external evils which are foreign to the predominant character. We may observe this process in operation in

this world, seeing how inherited and induced superficialities are overcome and rejected as the mind becomes more refined. So, according to spiritual law, of which we have some knowledge even now, man must be *himself*, inwardly and outwardly, before he can be comfortable in his own sphere. The happiness and usefulness of an interiorly good spirit must not be marred and deterred by a superficial nature which has within it elements that too readily respond to evil influences. Were we to retain a dual nature, and not to be confirmed in virtue to the exclusion of vice, we could never realise happiness, simply because we should be constantly made the sport of opposing influences. And, just as predominant good is delivered from superficial evil, so must confirmed evil be relieved of ephemeral good, lest a dark, false spirit should masquerade as an angel of light. It is this final decision of character that constitutes the "judgment." It is reached in the ordinary course of existence, in a perfectly normal way. We decide for ourselves; we *judge* ourselves; the quality of our affections, thoughts and actions determines our destiny; we go to our own place freely and joyously because it is of our own choice.

VII

NLESS our common observation of human nature greatly deceives us, we are compelled to conclude that few persons, if any, leave this earth as ideal characters. Up to our last moments here there is good in the worst of us, and bad in the best of us; it is, therefore, apparent that if we are to enjoy the society and environment of spiritual beings whose goodness is exalted and transparent, we must, after our transition, be purged of all degrading passions, desires, and imaginations. The purging process takes place in what, for want of a better term, we may call the Intermediate State. It is into that state we enter immediately after death, and there the decision of character, otherwise the *judgment*, is reached. We remain in the varied circumstances of that state until the outer man harmonises with the inner man, and we are fully prepared for that niche in the economy of the spiritual world in which we can serve according to our aptitude, and with the greatest possible delight. Thus the Intermediate State is a condition in the spiritual world in which we are gently prepared for our

eternal destiny. Our preparation is not imposed upon us by outside meddlers and injudicious busybodies; it is coincident with the inevitable and complete development of our personality, and this ensues without our being specially aware of what is happening. While we are busy with various affairs on earth, we seldom pause to consider how we re-act to circumstances, or to meditate on the fact that our inner attitude to life and our fellows is shaping our future weal or woe; and there is no reason to think that we shall be different in this respect in the busy life in the Intermediate State. The lads who have recently passed on in such unusual numbers are finding their true selves, and pressing forward to their eternal homes: they are not being faced with unnameable terrors, but are quite at their ease. All that is good for them will be theirs, and they will ultimately reach that state of life which is the best possible to their personality. We can desire no more than that, unless we are unreasonable enough to demand that their individuality should be overthrown, and they should appear in a guise that is not themselves, and in which we could neither recognise nor love them.

VIII



SURELY it is a strange mental obliquity which induces so many people to betray a morbid interest in sin, and to picture woe on its account in the after-life, almost to the exclusion of the vision of beatitude. They busy themselves in warning us to "flee from the wrath to come," and endeavour to terrify us into righteousness. Were they to present us with a view of exalted manhood which would appeal sweetly to our reason, we might the more readily cease to do evil and learn to do well, for "we must needs love the highest when we see it." Even the enlightened Shakespeare was prone to accentuate post-mortem terrors:

To die,—to sleep :—

To sleep ! perchance to dream : ay, there's the rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. . . .

.

Who would fardels bear,

To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,—
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will,
And makes us bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of ?

Henry Drummond, with all his fine idealism, did not fail to remind his readers that "Every soul is a book of judgment, and Nature, as a recording angel, marks there every sin." This is doubtless true; evil is evil, and heaven forbend that I should attempt to minimise its enormity or whittle away its consequences. Vice brings its own punishment, and it is sufficient; we may leave it at that.

But we must try to see things in proportion: sin leaves its mark on the soul, no doubt of that; but we have to remember that goodness also makes its beautiful impress. No matter how physically plain the features of a good woman, her virtue shines through them, and her transfiguring smile is a benediction. Nobleness of character refines the outer form, and endows it with an exquisite grace. Quoth Solomon, "A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine": this must be so, for it is the artistic idea within that forms the outward expression. Dr. Alexander Smith once said, "I have seen sweeter smiles on the lip of seventy than I ever saw on the lip of seventeen": that is what we naturally expect of the aged who have come clean, refined, and dignified through the temptations and discipline of life. If it is possible for loveliness of soul to

manifest itself to a partial extent through such recalcitrant material as that of our earthly bodies, may we not anticipate that, in the spiritual world, inward beauty will be evident in face and form, to the utmost perfection? I like that passage of the Swedish seer which reads:

“It is worthy of note, that the human form of every man after death is beautiful, in proportion as his love of divine truths is interior, and his life according to them is perfect; for the interiors of every one are opened and formed according to that love and life; and therefore the more interior the affection, the more it is conformable to heaven, and the more beautiful is the face.”

No art of earth, no matter how subtle, can beautify features that are not fashioned by grace and truth. It is from a deep, true instinct of the soul that we associate loveliness with goodness, and exquisite beauty with heaven. And it is beauty of character which yields appreciation of all sweetness and light, and truth in the inner soul that illuminates the mind:

He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit in the centre and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the midday sun.

.

A word of explanation. From what I have written it will seem that the spiritual world is strangely like this world, and life there very similar to that we live here. The likeness is real, but with a difference which is most marked. The substance of the spirit-world is more plastic than atomic matter, and the senses of the inhabitants are far more exquisite than they were in this world. And there our progress is not subject to the limitations of matter which, here, so continually irk the expansive soul.

HEAVEN AND HELL

I



VIDENTLY, our final condition in the spiritual world is primarily a matter of character. In the intermediate state, as we have learned, a man's inner quality, his real personality, is disclosed, and, unless we have erred in our reading of human proclivities, we are obliged to anticipate that, when decision of character is reached, a spirit will pass on from the intermediate state to the enjoyment of congenial companionship and environment. By a law of spiritual affinity, the wise will associate with the wise, and the foolish will follow after foolishness. On earth, we are in the constant effort to mould our environment according to our desires and thoughts; in the spiritual world, this effort will be continued, and we have every reason to believe that ultimately we shall find, or create, an environment which will accord with our character, and give us the fullest opportunity for self-expression. Thus, heaven

is the creation and abode of the heavenly-minded, and hell is the condition of such as have utterly degraded their manhood. Both states are a matter of personal disposition. The words of Lewis Morris ring true:

We are ourselves
Our heaven and hell, the joy, the penalty,
The yearning, the fruition. Earth is hell
Or heaven, and yet not only earth; but still,
After the swift soul leaves the gates of death,
The pain grows deeper and less mixed, the joy
Purer and less alloyed, and we are damned
Or blest, as we have lived.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." And with equal insight into the inwardness of things, He declared "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man." The man who demanded that Jesus should compel his brother to divide his inheritance with him was told to look to his own motives, and warned to beware of covetousness. Even now, we are in the kingdom of heaven if the kingdom of heaven is in us; and we are virtually in hell if our disposition is hellish.

“He who would be a great soul in future, must be a great soul now.” On earth we lay the foundations of eternity, and we may come to the realisation that:

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every bush afire with God.
But only he who sees
Puts off his shoes.

We have not far to look for signs of heaven; they are discoverable everywhere. We detect them in loving hearts, kind thoughts, and gracious deeds. Unaffected sympathy, high reverence, simple piety, goodwill, the spirit of brotherhood, sweet reasonableness, unselfishness and pure patriotism are all heavenly qualities; and when we look upon the countenances of the good and wise, we behold angels' faces. According to Francis Thompson, we do not need to look for angels in the starry heights:

Not where the wheeling systems darken
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—
The beat of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;
Turn but a stone and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

Angels are but men “in lighter habit clad,” and an interiorly good man on earth is an angel

“loaded for an hour.” And it is only poetic imagination that encumbers the angels with wings; for in the spirit-world wings are not needed; thought is swifter far than any mechanical contrivance, and is able to transport the soul with unfailing power.

Genuine goodness of soul, which we are prone to admire and value on earth, and which is the loveliest thing in our lives, is not annihilated by death; it survives and becomes more expansive in the spiritual world: being a heavenly quality, it constitutes heaven and transports its possessor to a heavenly environment. To be pointed, true heavenly character is formed by the love of God and charity to all mankind. The love of God involves a profound recognition of, and affection for, all that the term God implies: it is the love of the supreme goodness and wisdom, and it leads to a life that is ordered according to Divine law. Charity to man is exhibited in wishing him well, even if he be an antagonist, and in the desire that every spiritual blessing may be his. These, then, are the dominant factors in heavenly character; and we may easily understand that where they have full expression, there will be peace, harmony, beauty, and sweet content. Mere acquiescence in a

theological nostrum will not admit to heaven, nor can any device of priestcraft secure us a quick passage there. "Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams," but is reached by a reverent and manly service of God and man.

Heavenliness is simply true manliness, that is, manliness founded on reverence, love and charity; and heaven is the abode of human beings whose humaneness is intense. Heavenly beings will not flaunt their goodness or make an ostentatious show of their worth. Outwardly, although superbly beautiful in form and feature, they will live as men among men; they will occupy themselves with the duties of their sphere, and prove themselves sociable and unspeakably kind. Their dwelling-place will present the appearance of an ordinary social community, but ugliness and squalor, born of passion and greed, will be entirely absent. Their actions and occupations will be such as are necessary in a human existence. A heavenly being and an evil spirit may do things of the same sort, but the act which is outwardly the same may be inwardly different on account of the spirit in which it is performed, and the motive that sustains it.

There can be no *sameness* about heavenly

character. We know that among the good and wise on earth, no two individuals are alike. In heaven, individuality is intensified; as a matter of fact, the process of intensification begins here. Goodness reveals itself in a great variety of types, and, while there is sympathy and connection of the good everywhere, we realise that they do not form a featureless crowd. On the reverse, they form social coteries, and, at times, enjoy solitude. The economy of heaven is similar; there is no vast assemblage: the inhabitants behave humanly in the formation of social groups of persons of similar tastes, and when they are so inclined, they may enjoy solitude. There is every room for domesticity, for the following of art, science, philosophy and sociality. Worship, of a refined nature, relieved of the vague fears born of superstition, is practised with reverent spontaneity. The life of heaven, and the circumstances of heaven are an intense realisation of what our life on earth might be in the absence of selfishness, avarice, cruelty, and all man's inhumanity to man. Personally, no other kind of heaven would commend itself to my taste, and I do not think I am alone in my attitude.

II

THERE are some fictions about heaven which do not bear rational scrutiny. I can quite understand the household drudge crying out for a long rest, and the fervent enthusiast demanding protracted worship, especially if they are not given to the practice of reason. But the notion that heavenly happiness can be found in for ever singing the praises of God, or resting lazily in the sunshine of the Divine favour, can have no foundation in fact. Music must have a prominent place in heaven and confer great delight upon heavenly men and women; but it will be indulged in at suitable intervals. The truest praise of God is exhibited in an affectionate obedience to His laws, and the ungrudging performance of duty. As to eternal rest, if our conception of it is a state of slumberous inactivity, then I am confident that a brief trial of it would be sufficient to make one eager for something to do. Death, says Lowell,

Flings not ope the ivory gate of Rest—
Only the fallen spirit knocks at that—
But to benigner regions beckons us,
To destinies of more rewarded toil.

Interminable inactivity is not humanly practicable. Rest we must have, when we need it, and in heaven we shall surely get all that we need. But heaven is not the abode of "lazy saints," and indolence is far from being a heavenly characteristic. The heavenly men and women live fully up to the demand of the precept, "Be not weary in well-doing," and clearly understand the truth so aptly stated in John S. Dwight's lines:

Rest is not quitting the busy career;
Rest is the fitting of self to its sphere.

Then there is that strange conceit which has it that none but professed Christians can find a place in heaven. The notion would be laughable were it not evidence of lamentable prejudice and bitter sectarianism. As we have seen, it is not creed but character that decides the destiny of man. Creeds are local things, and there are many external factors that determine their forms; but the recognition of the Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness is universal, and the affections of charity are not confined to conventional religionists. Heaven is potential in all, irrespective of race or creed. In the ranks of professing Christians no two persons are of exactly the same opinion, and

diversity of doctrine is very marked. I see no objection to such variety of thought, so long as it is maintained in all charity and tolerance; there might, indeed, be considerable danger to religion in a monotonous sameness of thought. Christian character is the vital concern, and even in that we enjoy diversity. Right thinking is of extreme importance, because it guides emotion in orderly channels, but we cannot decide that Christians have established a monopoly in this regard. The thought that leads to heaven is very practical; it has relation to the Goodness that is at the heart of things, and to action in accordance with the decrees of charity and goodwill. Such thought is found among all peoples; it concerns vital religion, and is mostly independent of traditional ecclesiasticism. Besides, there is no system of religious thought that does not stand for some fundamental truth, and, if any particular system is vitiated by fallacies, are we sure it cannot be purged of them without loss of its real value and distinctiveness? Conventional Christianity would be greatly the better of a spring-cleaning, and so would Hinduism, Mahommedanism and Buddhism. In heaven there should be room for all kinds of wholesome religious thought

and worship, and I do not see why a Hindu should not consort with Hindus, and practise a refined Hinduism, any more than that a Christian should not follow genuine Christianity, in the heavenly realms. Provided that a man, of any religious persuasion, is of heavenly disposition, we may be sure that his mind will be purged of fallacies, and his ideas clarified, in the intermediate state, where he is prepared for his final destiny. And, there, the untutored and even the superstitious, may find all necessary enlightenment. It is right manliness that counts, and a man need not be less a man because we ill-manneredly dub him a heathen.

Misunderstanding of certain statements of Jesus has given rise to the notion that the rich man can have no hope of heaven, and that it is the close preserve of the poor. Were this true, we should be obliged to conclude that a man of wealth must inevitably be devoid of heavenly qualities, and that poverty is the concomitant of all virtue. Our observation of human behaviour does not confirm this view. In spite of his riches, a man of wealth may be reverent, kind and well-disposed; and, his poverty notwithstanding, a poor man may be envious, avaricious and full of malice. If such mere externals are

of any account in the matter, we might claim, with justice, that poverty and wealth are equal in handicapping spirituality. A rich man develops heavenliness, and thus is prepared for heaven, if he regards his wealth as a divine trust, and cultivates the inner affections of charity; a poor man, if he reacts to his poverty in a heavenly spirit, will reach heaven, because his interior disposition is ruled by heavenly principles.

III



FIND that a heartless survival of the superstitions of the dark ages still perturbs bereaved parents, particularly mothers. At some remote time theological fanatics, undeterred by sympathy or compassion, proclaimed the gross libel that unbaptised infants could have no place in heaven, and, unfortunately, the cruel falsity still lingers. Nothing could be farther from the truth. To say the least, it would be unjust to visit the carelessness and omissions of parents upon innocent and uncomprehending infants. On earth we do what we can for orphans, and

when they are placed in our care their very helplessness appeals to the best in us, and we treat them with tender regard. We feed and clothe them, attend to their education, give them moral and religious training, and desire no other than that they should grow up useful citizens. We do all that is possible to guard them from vicious influences. Are human beings in the spiritual world less humane than ourselves? I trow not. An infant of whatever nationality, whether baptised or unbaptised, is a young immortal and a potential angel. If he die in infancy, he is simply transported from our care to the charge of spiritual beings wiser than we are. "When infants die, they are still infants in the other life. They possess the same infantile mind, the same innocence in ignorance, and the same tenderness in all things." Being infants, they have had no chance of becoming spiritual wrecks; evil has not been practised by them, and thus become rooted in their character. They are utterly innocent and docile, and are thus prepared to benefit by the guidance and instruction of those who take them in charge. Do they wander or lie helpless and disregarded in an unsympathetic world? A thousand times, No!

Humane spirits, surely women, who love infants tenderly, must, in all humaneness, see to their needs, and take them to an environment where passion and vice will not corrupt them, and where they will be trained for heaven. Death cannot arrest spiritual growth; therefore, although infants are still infants immediately after death, they do not remain infants for ever: were they to so remain the purpose of their being would be defeated, for, evidently, it is ordained that all who come into existence should attain full manhood or womanhood. In heaven this means eternal youth and vigour.

They who are charged with the education of children in the other life will perform their duties in an affectionate manner, and with the knowledge that they are dealing with young immortals who are destined for heaven. Animated by the highest of ideals, they will draw out their intelligence with wonderful art, and see that their affections are wisely guided and strengthened. They will look to their every need, and protect their innocence from the assaults of temptation. One can imagine a perfect kindergarten wherein all sweet and beautiful affections and thoughts are portrayed by fitting representations, located in a protected

environment, into which evil never intrudes, and from which ugliness and fear are banished. Of all who join the Great Majority, we need have the least anxiety for the innocent infants and children.

IV

NOR need we be anxious about the fine boys who, to use ordinary phraseology, have died in battle. It occurs to me that some of the bereaved may be haunted by the suggestion that all cannot be well with them because they have had to engage in a sanguinary and gruesome business. Some over-bold critics of warfare have ventured to call the lads who gallantly take up arms in defence of their country murderers, and, in doing so refer, without discrimination, to the command, "Thou shalt not kill." Such a callous generalisation is most reprehensible, not to say wicked, and it is as far from the truth as it could possibly be. There is a vast distinction between real murder and the act of slaying in self-defence and in protection of one's country against the incursions of determined aggressors.

Murder arises from the malice of the heart; it involves fierce hatred and cold-blooded determination to destroy the hated object, body and soul. Of course, from a spiritual standpoint, seeing that man is immortal, it is impossible to kill anyone; but notwithstanding this fact, there may be individuals who are hellish enough to inwardly desire the utter annihilation of persons whom they bitterly detest. If there are such, they must be few in number, and totally absent from the ranks of the youthful patriots. Whatever passions are aroused during life-and-death conflicts, they are short-lived, and in his normal state the young soldier is as innocent of the desire to kill as a new-born babe. Hatred is a rare quality—a fine passion gone astray, and the warrior is hard put-to to “nurse his wrath to keep it warm”; goodwill is the normal state of mind, and the line of least resistance. There is absolutely no need to picture the slain soldier wandering remorseful in some gloomy Tartarus, crying, “What, will these hands ne’er be clean,” in the manner of Lady Macbeth. A soiled hand does not necessarily involve a stained soul.

Most of the slain ones, because of their youth, have passed into the eternal world with their real natures undefined. Their inner character

must still be in process of formation, and, we may be assured, they have come under influences well calculated to develop the best that is in them. Their happy destiny cannot be marred by the slaughter in which they have been engaged, and for which they had no fixed desire; they will be esteemed for their love, their self-sacrifice, and the high nobleness of which they are capable.

There is a profound spiritual quality in pure patriotism, and this must not be forgotten in the present connection. I do not think I can be justly accused of stretching my imagination when I say it is a law of the heart that a man should love his country better than himself. This law is recognised when one's homeland is attacked by an invader, for then, regardless of consequences, and without fear, one rushes to the defence: self-sacrifice becomes the order of the day. Herein is an instinctive altruism that savours of heaven, not of its opposite. As one has declared, "If ruin threatens one's country from an enemy or any other source, it is noble to die for it, and it is glorious for a soldier to shed his blood in her defence. . . . He who loves his country, and from good-will does good to it, in the other life loves the Lord's Kingdom,

for there the Lord's Kingdom is his country." May not the departed lads be patriots in the Kingdom of heaven? We will leave it at that.

V

HELL is not a pleasant consideration, but we must face facts. And in facing facts we gladly dismiss fictions. The sea of fire and burning brimstone has no place in the eternal world, for such material things cannot exist in the realm of spirit. How the notion originated it is hard to say; possibly it arose from a cryptic reference to the possible destruction, in this world, of the cruel persecutors of the early Christians, by lava-flows from active volcanoes. And a too literal reading of the cryptic prophecy has perpetuated the ghastly fiction. It could thrive only in an atmosphere of ignorant credulity and superstition, and, happily, its hold on the popular imagination is disappearing with the spread of education; in fact, it has practically vanished.

Hell, like heaven, is a state of character creative of an environment corresponding to it.

As we have learned, the prime qualities of heavenly character are the love of God and goodwill to all mankind. Hell is an exactly opposite condition of mind; it is constituted by intense, dominating self-love and the various evils it engenders. The lust of dominating others, the greed of gain, avarice, cruelty, envy, hatred, malice and vicious impulses are all hell; they are hell in this world, and hell in the world to come. As I say, we must face facts. We realise, to our cost, that these evils are active in the mind of man; death, being a mere process of transition, does not eradicate them, and it is inevitable that they should be continued after death. If they are superficial qualities, overlaying an inherently good heart, they will be removed in the intermediate state, and the purified character will be welcomed in a suitable heavenly coterie. But if they are permitted to eat into the inner soul, and are voluntarily, and with knowledge of their wrongness, accepted and confirmed as ruling principles, the logical issue can be no other than an utterly perverted manhood which says, "Evil, be thou my good." In such case, the inner nature is evil, and any good that appears is only seeming or hypocritical; it must certainly be removed in the

intermediate state, lest it prove a delusion and a snare to the unwitting.

The good gravitate towards the good and repel the evil: the evil gravitate towards the evil and repel the good. In the latter case hell is the result, and in the former, heaven. The evil are not cast headlong into a dark abyss by an irate judge, but they seek evil associates, and what is to us an ugly environment, because they prefer their company to that of heavenly spirits. This seems a hard and sad saying—all the harder and sadder because we, in all kindness of heart, wish everybody to attain to our own particular standard of good, and to be eternally happy. But happiness is equally distributed, and, when we come to think of it, we find that many whom we deem unhappy because they are in seemingly less fortunate circumstances than ourselves, are really not so. In fact, they are usually as well pleased with their circumstances as we are with ours, and would not care to change places with us. The evil, in the spiritual world, are satisfied with their evils, and would not change place with the good. What is unsatisfactory to us pleases them very well; they would be like fish out of water in a sublimer sphere.

Of course, it is sad that the evil prefer a state of hell to heaven; but what can you do to improve matters? Do you propose that they should be transported, by an act of unconditional mercy, to heaven? What would be the result? Your mercy would be no kindness, because they could not enjoy heaven any more than a burrowing worm appreciates being lifted out of its comfortable hole in the earth, and submission to the fierce rays of a burning sun. Besides, being as they are, they would be a menace to the peace of heaven.

Then, you say, hell is virtually heaven to the evil. Not exactly. Social law obtains even in the sphere of their choice. The evil on earth suffer no penalties so long as they submit to the restraint of law, and so it is in the other world. While they abstain from violent outbreaks of wrong-doing, they pass a comfortable existence. Their trouble is, that they do not love the law and are inwardly rebellious against it. Their nature impels them to do wrong and renders them restless under restraint. The lust of evil is the real fire of hell; it gnaws at the very vitals of those whom it dominates. But whatever are the disabilities of hell, the evil would rather put up with them than be placed in

associations for which they have no relish. Therefore, in all mercy, they are left to their own devices. Remove a coterie of persons who have no love for cleanliness to a palace, what would be the result? It can safely be left to the reader's imagination. All we can do is to make the best of a bad business.

“THE SOUND OF A VOICE THAT IS STILL”


I



KNOW, yes, I know, and can sympathise. There is that longing “for the touch of a vanish’d hand, the sound of a voice that is still.” Riven love, I think inadvisedly, would tear asunder the veil that is wisely drawn between the eternal world and this. Fortunately, the almost rebellious yearning is not accentuated by the progress of time; we come to accept the inevitable with a good grace. Over much longing for signs from the other side tends to make one morbid, neurotic, and neglectful of immediate duties. It is right that we should know something of the realm in which we are to spend eternity, but we must not allow an overweening curiosity to impel us to employ disorderly methods in obtaining information which, after all, may prove to be scanty and unreliable.

Knowledge has come to us unsought which has proved to be more reliable than the odd scraps that are picked up at spiritualistic séances. Following the line of argument adopted in the foregoing chapters, and basing conclusions on the absolute continuity of spiritual law, we arrive at convictions that are likely to be strengthened by experience, and are enabled to form a mental picture of human life in the spiritual world that accords better with common sense than some of the fantastic descriptions I have read in spiritualistic literature. But I anticipate.

II

HAT there is a close, telepathic relationship of spirits in the flesh with spirits in the eternal world, I have no doubt. I believe that, all unconsciously, we influence spirits invisibly associated with us, and that in the same manner we are influenced by them. It is sympathy that is the connecting link between us. By the same law there is a mutual passage of influence between men in this world, no matter what distance they may be from each other. No man lives entirely

to himself; even in the loneliest solitudes he is touched by the thoughts of others, and radiates influences of far-reaching consequence. Soul reaches out to soul through a finer element of its own, and


Thoughts do not need the wings of words
To fly to any goal;
Like subtle lightning, not like birds,
They speed from soul to soul.
Hide in your heart a bitter thought,
Still it has power to blight;
Think love, although you speak it not,
It gives the world more light.

But, under what we call normal conditions, we do not see spiritual beings. Our material organs of vision are not attuned to the vibrations of spiritual substance, and our spiritual eyes are closed. The biologist tells us that the caterpillar has that within its body which, in the imago, will be a wing. But the caterpillar must become a butterfly before it can float on the breeze. We have spiritual eyes, but cannot use them until we are advanced to our fuller life in the spiritual world. “As the sparrow could not fly in the summer air, and voice the fulness of its delight, until its organisation had been effected in the shell, so neither can man enter into full consciousness of the spiritual world, until the

proper spiritual organisation has been formed in the material body ; and as the bird cannot enter into its new world until it breaks its shell and escapes from it, so neither can man rise into the spiritual world until he throws off the material body, and thus breaks down the partition walls which separate him from it."


And, usually, spirits in the other world, no matter how closely they are associated with us telepathically, cannot see us in our material state, or hear our conversation. This is because they have sloughed the physical body and its organs of sight and hearing, for which they have no further use. When we come to take a practical view of the matter, we realise that this is better so: we must have privacy, and there are times when it would be far from desirable for spirits to intrude. We have business here sufficiently absorbing to prevent us from wishing to intrude into the affairs of the other world ; and spirits, too, have engagements which hold their interest and keep them from prying into our activities.

III

 HAVE already indicated my conviction that some sort of open commerce does take place between the two worlds; the records of psychic phenomena are too abundant and well-attested to be dismissed as negligible. But such commerce is abnormal. Yet it must take place according to law; it is not miraculous. How, then, can it be established? It is conceivable that in some instances the ordinary eye may possess unusual sensitivity to etheric ripples, enabling an individual to see the subtler forms, elaborated out of the finer substances of nature, through which spirits maintain a certain connection with this world; this, as before mentioned, may account for some kinds of clairvoyance. Perhaps the spiritual senses of some persons are developed earlier than is usual; in which event they may, at times, be conscious of their spiritual surroundings. Anyway, for conscious communication to be realised, either we must develop our psychic faculties, or spirits, on the other side, must make use of some medium, or material substance, by means of which they can make their presence

known. If I am willing to relinquish voluntary control of my material being, and lend it to a spirit versed in the art of using it, he may be able to see through my eyes, speak with my vocal organs, and write with my fingers. To readers unacquainted with psychic practices, this may seem an extraordinary and incredible statement, but in spiritualistic circles it will be regarded as quite commonplace. "Mediums" who are willing to yield their faculties to such uses are not uncommon. Personally, I consider it a damaging and unmanly surrender. As we might expect, adventurers have exploited mediumship and defrauded the public; but after all allowance has been made for fraudulent phenomena, there still remains a plentiful residuum of fact. It is, however, worthy of special note that the disclosures which come through mediums have added nothing to the mass of knowledge that has been gained by far less humiliating means.

IV

HE efforts to traffic with the departed are now so numerous, and so strongly advocated, that I feel compelled to strike a warning note. I say nothing against the advocates of spiritualism; I acknowledge their earnestness and sincerity, and if they are prepared to accept the risks to which they expose themselves, that is their concern. I do think, however, that they should carry on their propaganda with greater caution and discrimination. Every experienced psychic investigator admits that spiritistic practices are fraught with danger to morals and health, and declares that they should be engaged in with extreme caution: it is necessary to “try the spirits.” I am convinced that the mass of people who respond to propaganda are too undisciplined, if not too credulous, to be in a position to rightly assess the value of phenomena; it should be treated with the greatest reserve. Expert scientific enquiry may have its uses, yet one is not surprised at the meagreness of its results. Take, for instance, Sir Oliver Lodge’s researches as recorded in his well-known *Raymond*. The

result is very disappointing. There is the claim that immortality has been scientifically demonstrated; that is to the good, but the human race, generally, believes in immortality, and any section that does not believe in it will not be convinced "even if one rose from the dead." The eminent investigator is satisfied that Raymond has survived bodily death; that, also, is to the good, but I am not convinced by the evidence that Raymond himself gave the sign. At a séance, when communications are given through a medium, it is the easiest thing possible for practical jokers on the other side to personate other spirits and mislead the sitters.

I testify to the things I have seen. The very atmosphere of the séance chamber is repugnant to the lover of light. The expectant circle sits in gloom; the medium becomes "controlled," and frequently performs antics that are far from dignified; there is always the possibility of fraud; and even when genuine communications come, the identity and moral character of the communicator are in question. Let the reader heed the words of Sir Oliver: "It may be asked, Do I recommend all bereaved persons to devote the time and attention I have done to getting communications and recording them? Most

certainly I do not!" With this conclusion I heartily concur.

In my view, then, the methods of the séance are disorderly, and yield little satisfaction. Why should we ask a medium to allow his organisation to be used, possibly to its detriment, by spirits of questionable morality? And have we any right to attempt to draw the departed into a material environment which they have quitted for ever? Rather than endeavour to hold them to earth, we ought to desire their utter emancipation from earthiness and quick progress into sublimer conditions. David adopted a sensible attitude in regard to his departed boy when he said, "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me." With such possibilities of happiness before them, we ought not to wish for their return; but we should prepare ourselves to go to them, by growing in all manly graces.

We must not overlook the psychic experiences that come unsought. They may, perhaps, be placed in another category. We must accept them for what they are worth, and exercise the nicest discrimination in respect to their value. They are not always of a pleasant kind, and even when they seem delightful they may prove

misleading. If they conduce to charity and goodwill, they will do us no harm; but if they encourage selfishness and malice, as they often do, we must see to it that their baneful influence has no response. All communicating spirits are not angels of light, and we must not think that because they speak from the other side their statements are true. They are not the repositories of all knowledge; indeed, they may be more ignorant than ourselves. We have to beware of credulity.

V



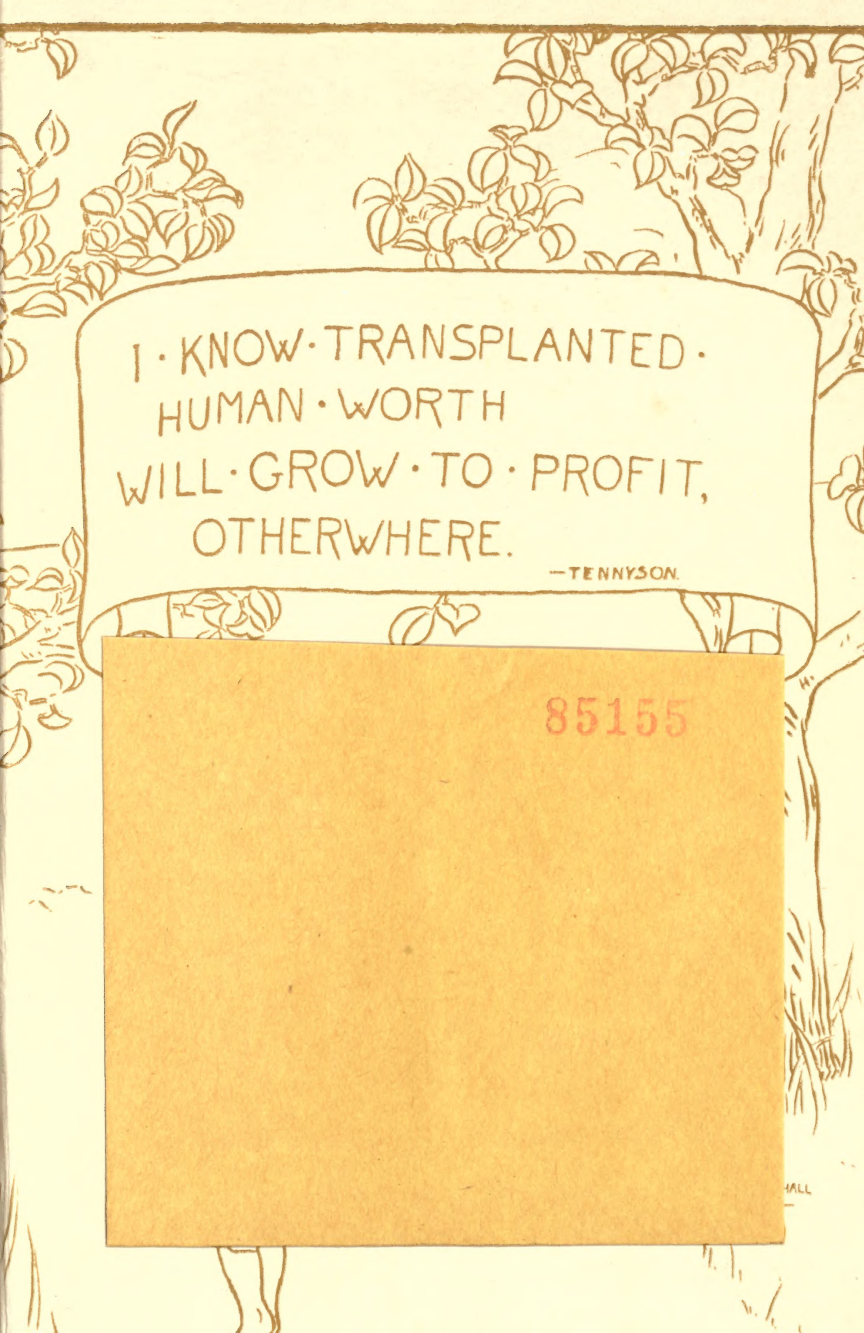
UT a truce to this discussion. Is it not enough for us to know that all is well with the departed; to realise that they are still reasonable human beings eternally progressing in a rational human environment? The probabilities in that direction are so overwhelming that, to me, they leave no room for doubt.

“ Thus I know
This earth is not my sphere.
For I cannot so narrow me,
But that still exceed it.”

I am with you, immortal Browning ; with you all the way. Instinct, reason, experience, yes, and knowledge too, all combine to establish the conviction : *They do not die ; they are not dead.*

FINIS.





I · KNOW · TRANSPLANTED ·
HUMAN · WORTH
WILL · GROW · TO · PROFIT,
OTHERWHERE.

—TENNYSON.

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